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ABSTRACT

This is the third and final report resulting from a study of external degree programs and graduates conducted in 1976-77. The present study attempts to answer the basic concern that prompted the study: how useful and valuable are such degrees from the perspective of the graduates themselves? Survey responses from 1,486 program graduates were analyzed, and the results are presented in detail. Addressed are such matters as factors influencing the choice of program, students' initial goals and goal attainment, the negotiability of the external degree in the world of work, education after the external degree, the employer survey, and a comparison of the occupation- and education-related experiences of external and traditional degree graduates of Florida International University. (MSE)

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Graduates' Experiences in Employment and Further Study

The External Degree as a Credential

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THE EXTERNAL DEGREE AS A CREDENTIAL: GRADUATES' EXPERIENCES IN EMPLOYMENT AND FURTHER STUDY

By

Carol P. Sosdian and Laure M. Sharp

Bureau of Social Science Research, Inc.

April, 1978

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This is the third and final report resulting from the study of external degree graduates sponsored by the National Institute of Education (NIE) and carried out by the Bureau of Social Science Research (BSSR) in cooperation with the American Council on Education (ACE).

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This is the third and final report resulting from a study of external degree programs and graduates conducted in 1976-77 under the sponsorship of the National Institute of Education. The initial concerns which prompted this study were cogently summarized in a statement by a staff member of the Institute:

> The number of institutions utilizing independent, off-campus study as a primary mode of instruction has grown at something close to exponential rates; enrollment in such institutions is equally impressive; claims and counterclaims are being made about the marketability of these degrees; in a time of budgetary retrenchment these programs will be particularly visible if not vulnerable. The policy issues raised by these observations coincide with a major objective of the National Institute of Education: to expand and evaluate the options available to adults to move back and forth between education and work. The characteristics of these programs and of their students suggest that adults expect external institutions to be well-suited to their needs. Among those needs are occupational and educational mobility or change. NIE has merely asked the questions "is the external degree consistent with these expectations and is it comparable to any occupational or academic advantages conferred by traditional certificates?[1]

Earlier publications issued in connection with this study dealt primarily with the identification and characteristics of institutions and programs (at the Associate and Bachelor's level) through which external degrees are being offered.[2] The present study attempts to provide answers to the basic concerns which prompted the study in the first place: how useful and valuable are such degrees from the perspective of the graduates themselves?

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[1]Presentation by Samuel Phillips to the first meeting of the Advisory Committee, External Degree Study, Washington, D.C., November, 1976.

[2]Carol P. Sosdian and Laure M. Sharp, Guide to Undergraduate External Degree Programs in the United States (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, March, 1978) and Carol P. Sosdian, External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, March, 1978).

To obtain the answers to these questions, we went through a long series of steps, some of which are described in greater detail in Volume II of this report.[3] Briefly, we started out, with the help of knowledgeable informants, by establishing criteria for "externalness" so as to set boundaries for the types of Associate and Bachelor's programs to be covered by our study. We then proceeded to identify all such programs offered in the United States during 1976-77, contacted each of them, and asked them to supply some institutional and program data. A total of 244 external degree programs located in 134 colleges and universities were identified and responded to our request for data. Between them, these 244 programs enrolled approximately 54,000 students in 1976, and had granted a total of 4,600 A.A. and 14,000 B.A. degrees since they were founded (a few as early as 1960, but most since 1972). However, because our survey was to be limited to graduates who had had some labor market experience, we restricted eligibility for the survey of graduates to programs which had graduated students in 1975 or earlier. The universe of eligible students was thereby reduced to 10,632.

Programs were not selected on a random basis. Instead, the selection was a purposive one, designed to guarantee the inclusion of sufficient subsamples of graduates in various types of programs and at each of the two degree levels of interest (Associate and Bachelor's). We chose for inclusion in the survey a total of 32 programs of which we requested the names and most recent address of all graduates, and anticipated receiving approximately 3,000 names for the survey. In the end, 3,499 graduates were sampled for the survey. Graduates were roughly divided between Associate and Bachelor's degree holders. Of these, only 2,647 were survey-eligible (the others could not be located because of lack of valid addresses or were ineligible for the survey for various other reasons) and 1,486 subsequently returned usable questionnaires.[4]

The data which will be presented in Chapters 2-5 cannot be claimed to be a statistically accurate profile of external degree holders and of their post-degree experiences.[5] Rather, they constitute a set of descriptive and comparative materials, developed for the purpose of documenting and examining various factors--student characteristics, program characteristics, and characteristics of the larger environment--which affect to some degree the extent to which external degrees benefit those who obtained them.

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[3] Carol P. Sosdian and Laure M. Sharp, The External Degree as a Credential: Notes on Methodology (Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, March, 1978). (Final Report, Volume II.)

[4] For further details about selection procedures, eligibility requirements, response rates and response bias, see Vol. II, Notes on Methodology, Sections A and B.

[5] A stylistic note: we have adopted the convention throughout the data presentation for "N" to represent the number of graduates who answered a particular question, and for "B" to represent the total base number of graduates who were eligible to answer that particular question. Percentages shown in tabular format are computed with "N."

Most of the discussion in this report is based on the data furnished by the 1,486 graduates who completed the questionnaire they received.[6] In addition, two supplementary data sets were created for this study. Although it was recognized from the outset that no single study could answer the many questions about external degrees to which policymakers and educators might want to have the answers, two issues were of special concern to the National Institute. The first was the extent to which employers would treat external degrees as acceptable credentials for recruitment and promotion. A special survey was designed to explore this issue; the results are reported in Chapter VI.

A second major concern was the search for comparative data. The policy question to which NIE sought the answer from this research can be phrased as follows: would these graduates have been better off if they had invested their effort and tuition money in a more traditional program? We struggled with this problem both conceptually and in practical terms, but did not reach a solution enabling us to develop or analyze such data during this study. Conceptually, it was clear that for some students, there may be no educational alternative, and the external degree is the only game in town. Also, since the bulk of these degree holders are adults, comparisons with recent college graduates were open to obvious challenges. Defining and locating a matched population of degree holders from traditional programs, such as evening or extension programs, presented enormous practical and financial difficulties and left an important methodological gap. We discovered that few institutions offer both external and part-time adult programs, and therefore institutional variance of unmeasurable magnitude would be introduced in a comparative study.

We felt that some light might be shed on this issue by comparing the experiences of graduates who had attended "free-standing" institutions, i.e., those created for the exclusive purpose of granting external degrees, and with "affiliated" institutions, those which offer traditional as well as external degree programs. Our hypothesis was that holders of external degrees awarded by the latter--many of which are well-known and long-established schools--might benefit from some "halo" effect. In addition to this analytic effort to explore one aspect of the comparability issue, a modest attempt was made to obtain some comparative information based on experiences of both external and conventional degree holders from one institution (Florida International University). The findings are reported in Chapter VII, but the very small number of cases, the absence of data for Associate degree recipients and other limitations of this data set preclude generalization.

To our knowledge, this is the first multi-institutional study which provides comprehensive and systematic information about the experiences of those who completed external degrees. As such, we feel that it makes a valuable contribution to our knowledge about the educational aspirations and experiences of a small but growing segment of post-secondary degree holders. The information developed here about

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[6] A copy of the questionnaire will be found in Vol. II, Notes on Methodology, Appendix I.

linkages between education and work, and about the uses which older graduates--and especially women--make of their educational credentials is also of great interest.

Nevertheless, one should not lose sight of the limitations of this body of data and of the many unanswered questions which remain in spite of it.

First of all, respondents' self-reports and self-perceptions, while an excellent (and often the only) source of information about individual experiences and behaviors, cannot fully take the place of observational or record-based data. For example, while there is no reason to doubt a respondent's report that with respect to subject matter knowledge he is just as well prepared as a student coming from a more traditional program, it would be helpful to have test data or other assessment information on this topic. Similarly, while those employers or personnel managers who gave low priority to degree-related factors in recruitment no doubt reflected their honest convictions, it would be good to validate these data through information on the qualifications of persons actually recruited in a recent time period. Although on the basis of our experience in survey research we are confident that there is fairly high congruence between attitude data and more "factual" information on the same topic, not all researchers share this conviction.

Secondly, the goals of the research were narrowly defined: to assess the usefulness of the external degree with respect to access to other educational institutions and in employment settings. This narrow objective did not preclude the examination of certain other goals. Chapter III provides valuable information about graduates' personal goals in seeking a degree and the extent to which the external degree fulfilled these, although clearly there are many other "pay-offs" from external degrees to which this study could pay at most peripheral attention.

Similarly, we have not dealt with issues of program quality or knowledge acquisition, although these are among the major concerns of academic critics of nontraditional programs. A good case can be made for the importance of covering issues pertaining to curriculum and instruction in a study such as the one we conducted. The quality of an educational experience and the extent to which the student is counseled, supervised and evaluated affect the amount of learning which takes place and no doubt post-degree experiences as well.[7]

Essentially then, we have carried out a narrowly focused study of the credentialling elements of the external degree, based primarily on graduates' self-reports and supplemented by data from two small pilot studies. Within these limitations, this study hopes to provide a first set of useful answers to an important educational question.

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[7] For discussion of the importance of student-advisor interaction during the learning process and also for additional references, see Bradley A. Hall, Jr., The Empire State College Mentor: An Emerging Role (available from the Office of Research and Development, Empire State College, 2 Union Avenue, Saratoga Springs, N.Y., September, 1975).

CHAPTER II

PROFILE OF EXTERNAL DEGREE GRADUATES AND FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR CHOICE OF EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM

Profile of External Degree Graduates Responding to the Survey

Comparison between Respondents and The Original Survey Population

Before discussing the characteristics of external degree holders and the reasons they gave for their choice of an external degree program, we want briefly to note and to compare the characteristics of respondents with those of the population originally selected for the survey (we are discussing elsewhere in considerable detail the way the original survey population was chosen and what we learned about the differences between respondents and nonrespondents).[1]

Our original survey population consisted of 3,499 external degree graduates, half of whom had earned an Associate, and half a Bachelors external degree. Over three-quarters (78%) were men. Although it was not possible to calculate for each of the nine specific areas of study[2] the precise proportion of graduate population who had obtained their degree in the field (large numbers of graduates had been identified by their degree-granting institution as having earned a degree in a non-specified or "individualized" area), we did select graduates from three broad areas: business or public administration, applied social sciences and human services (including for example, criminal justice studies, education, counseling), and General/Liberal studies (usually a variation of a liberal arts program tailored to the needs and interests of adults).

Of the original 3,499 graduates, 852 were subsequently eliminated, leaving a survey-eligible population of 2,647.[3] The over-all response rate to the mail survey was 56 percent.

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[1] See Volume II of this report The External Degree as a Credential: Notes on Methodology, Sections A and B.

[2] The nine areas of study we used to classify degrees were Natural or Physical Sciences; Behavioral or Social (Non-Applied) Sciences; Applied Social Sciences and Human Services; Humanities or Fine Arts; Engineering and Related Technical Studies; Business or Public Administration; Nursing and other Health Studies; General or Liberal Studies Programs; Individualized Studies.

[3] Of the 2,647, 1,153 (44%) were Associate and 1,494 (56%) were Bachelor graduates.

The following comparison between the original survey population and the final respondent population shows that with respect to three important characteristics--the graduates' sex, the degree obtained, and the field of study--the respondent population appeared very similar to the larger group originally selected for the survey.

Of the 1,486[4] undergraduate external degree recipients who returned our mail questionnaire, 589 had earned the Associate degree (40%), and 897 the Bachelors (60%). Not quite three-quarters (71%) were men.

As shown in Table II-1, for most areas of study, proportions of respondents were typically higher at the bachelors level. The single exception to this was the area of General Studies, which was represented by proportionately more Associates. Table II-2 demonstrates that for the most part, the distributions of Associate and Bachelor respondents according to area of study were quite similar: only in three study areas were proportions more than ten percentage points apart.

Profile of External Degree Graduate Respondents

The typical external degree graduate in our survey (Table II-3) was white (89%),[5] was about 36 years old at the time of completing the external degree,[6] likely to be married (80%), with children[7] (about 69% had at least one child), employed (89%) in a professional, subprofessional, or technical occupation (54%), earning about $15,000 at the time of the survey, and was living in a household with a total income of about $21,600. These are, however, "average" figures which did differ to some extent according to sex or level of degree, or sometimes both. For example, 18 percent of the women in the study reported being divorced, separated, or widowed, in comparison with only 6 percent of the men. The employment status of men and women was also quite different. Men were considerably more often employed: at the time of the survey, 94 percent of the reporting men had a job, compared with 77 percent of the women; while enrolled in external degree studies, the respective figures were 97 percent and 78 percent.

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[4]Four respondents had earned a graduate-level external degree and had been mistakenly identified on their sponsoring institution's mailing list. Data from their questionnaires were excluded from analysis.

[5]The 11 percent nonwhite respondents were split evenly between the Associate and Bachelor levels.

[6]Because EDP graduates entered their programs with widely varying amounts of previously-earned credits towards completing their degree, and it was prohibitive for us to collect detailed credit-related program entry information from the respondent, length of time taken to complete the program was not measured in this survey.

[7]Associate respondents typically had younger children than did Bachelor respondents.

TABLE II-1

NUMBER OF RESPONDING GRADUATES BY AREA OF STUDY AND LEVEL OF DEGREE

Level of Degree		Area of Study										Total
		Natural/ Physical Sciences	Behavioral/ Social Sciences	Applied Social Sciences	Humanities, Fine Arts	Engineering and Related	Business/ Public Administration	Health	General Studies	Individual Program	Did not Specify	
Associate	N	27	90	73	50	7	114	1	181	24	22	589[a]
	(%)	(50)	(50)	(24)	(52)	(24)	(27)	(3)	(71)	(40)	(44)	(40)
Bachelor	N	27	90	235	46	22	310	30	73	36	28	897[a]
	(%)	(50)	(50)	(76)	(48)	(76)	(73)	(97)	(23)	(60)	(56)	(60)
Total	N	54	180	308	96	29	424	31	254	60	50	1,486[a]
	(%)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)

[a]These numbers constitute the base figures (noted with a "B") for many of the following tables which reference Associates, Bachelors, and All graduates. For following tables, the number of persons responding to a particular question or item is denoted by "N," whereas the number of persons who were eligible to answer (some of whom may have chosen to skip the item or question) is denoted by "B."

TABLE II-2

NUMBER AND PROPORTION OF RESPONDING GRADUATES BY LEVEL OF DEGREE AND AREA OF STUDY

	Level of Degree					
	Associate		Bachelor		All	
	N	(%)	N	(%)	N	(%)
Natural/Physical Sciences	27	(5)	27	(3)	54	(4)
Behavioral/Social Sciences	90	(15)	90	(10)	180	(12)
Applied Social Sciences	73	(12)	235	(26)	308	(21)
Humanities/Fine Arts	50	(8)	46	(5)	96	(6)
Engineering & Related	7	(1)	22	(2)	29	(2)
Business/Public Administration	114	(19)	310	(35)	424	(28)
Health	1	(-)	30	(3)	31	(2)
General Studies	181	(31)	73	(8)	254	(17)
Individual Program	24	(4)	36	(4)	60	(4)
Did not specify	22	(4)	28	(3)	50	(3)
Total N	589	(99)[a]	897	(99)[a]	1,486	(99)[a]

[a]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE II-3

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDING GRADUATES
(Percentage Responding)

	Men	Women	Associates	Bachelors	All
	(B=1031)[a]	(B=420)[a]	(B=589)	(B=897)	(B=1486)
Percent Associate	39	40			
Percent Bachelor	61	60			
(N responding)	(1031)	(420)			
Percent men			71	71	71
Percent women			29	29	29
(N responding)			(570)	(881)	(1451)
Percent white	89	89	88	90	89
Percent nonwhite	11	11	12	10	11
(N responding)	(1021)	(399)	(574)	(871)	(1445)
Percent married	85	65	79	80	80
Percent separated/div /wid.	6	18	8	10	9
Percent never married	9	17	13	10	11
(N responding)	(977)	(349)	(572)	(755)	(1327)
Percent no children	25	41	26	34	31
Percent one or two children	43	33	43	36	39
Percent three or more	32	26	31	30	30
(N responding)	(1031)	(420)	(587)	(896)	(1483)
Median age at completion of EDP	36	36	33	37	36
(N responding)	(1031)	(420)	(589)	(897)	(1486)
Percent employed while in EDP[b]	97	78	91	91	91
(N responding)	(1018)	(411)	(576)	(883)	(1459)
Percent professional, subprofessional, technical	38	67	38	50	45
Percent armed forces	30	1	30	18	23
Percent clerical, sales, lower management	10	25	18	11	13
(N responding)	(973)	(411)	(516)	(799)	(1315)
Percent employed at time of survey[b]	94	77	88	90	89
(N responding)	(1005)	(406)	(571)	(869)	(1440)
Percent professional, subprofessional, technical	47	73	43	60	54
Percent armed forces	21	1	21	13	16
Percent clerical, sales, lower management	12	17	18	10	13
(N responding)	(916)	(306)	(484)	(767)	(1251)
Median own income (job at time of survey)[c]	$17,500	$ 9,900	$13,700	$17,200	$15,500
(N responding)	(917)	(272)	(502)	(688)	(1190)
Median household income (at time of survey)[c]	$22,200	$19,400	$19,200	$23,800	$21,600
(N responding	(945)	(325)	(549)	(721)	(1270)
Median household income (at time of survey)[c]: Married	$23,200	$2[illegible],500			
(N responding)	(819)	(2[illegible]5)			
Median household income (at time of survey)[c]: Sep./Div./Widow	$17,300	$11,700			
(N responding)	(54)	(57)			
Median household income (at time of survey)[c]: Never married	$12,000	$12,000			
(N responding)	(71)	(51)			

[a]Two percent of all respondents (N=35) did not record their sex. Base figures for "All" columns are hence without regard to sex of respondent.

[b]Only selected occupations are shown in this table; percentages do not total to 100%.

[c]Rounded to the nearest $100.

Differences along level of degree were seen in three key areas--in age upon completing the external degree program, in type of employment, and in income (for Associate graduates, the median age was 33, as compared to 37 for Bachelors; fewer Associates had professional, subprofessional, or technical jobs; both reported personal and household income were lower for Associate graduates).

There was some evidence of change in type of job since completion of the external degree (more detailed discussion regarding this can be found in Chapter IV). For each of the four analysis groups (men, women, Associates, Bachelors), there appeared to be a sizeable increase in the proportion employed in professional, subprofessional, or technical occupations. Given the decrease in proportion in the armed forces, some portion of this change may have been due to those who moved into the civilian job sector.

As expected, more women than men reported working in clerical, sales, or lower management positions. Correspondingly, women reported lower personal income than did men, and the gap was a startling one ($9,900 as compared to $17,500).

Marital status made a noticeable difference in reported household income, especially in the case of women. Whereas both sexes reported approximately the same household income if married (about $23,000) or if never married (about $12,000), separated, divorced, or widowed women reported a noticeably lower income than did men in comparable status ($11,700, compared with $17,300).

Although men and women did not differ in their choice of level of external degree (39% of reporting men and 40% of the women had earned an Associate degree), they did differ in their choice of area of study (Table II-4). Women more often enrolled in applied social sciences/human services or in humanities/fine arts programs; men appeared to prefer business or public administration.

Table II-5 shows that while the median age at which our respondents completed their external degree was 36, the external degree programs whose graduates we tapped were reaching even older adults. Twenty-three percent of our respondents completed their degree while in their forties, and 13 percent completed it at the age of 50 or over.

External degree graduates appeared not to be newcomers to the fountain of education (Table II-6). Overall, 32 percent of those responding had previously completed a college degree, and men more often than women had done so (34%, compared with 25%). Although the degree completed previously was most often an Associate degree, in some cases it was at the baccalaureate level (data not shown).

TABLE II-4

AREA OF STUDY BY SEX
(Percentage Responding)

Area of Study	Sex		
	Men	Women	All
Behavioral/Social Sciences . .	12	13	12
Applied Social Sciences . . .	18	31	22
Humanities, Fine Arts	4	13	7
Business/Public Administration	37	12	30
General/Liberal Studies . . .	18	15	17
Individualized and Other . .	11	16	12
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(997)	(409)	(1,406)
(B)	(1,031)	(420)	(1,451)

TABLE II-5

AGE AT TIME OF DEGREE COMPLETION
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage Responding)

Age at Completion	Level of Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Under 20	10	8	9
20-29	25	20	22
30-39	35	32	33
40-49	18	26	23
50 and over.	12	14	13
Total	100	100	100
Median Age at Completion	33	37	36[a]
(N)	(589)	(897)	(1,486)
(B)	(589)	(897)	(1,486)

[a]Median age was 36 for both sexes.

TABLE II-6

EVER COMPLETED ANY COLLEGE DEGREE PREVIOUSLY[a]
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE AND BY SEX
(Percentage Responding)

Ever Completed	Level of External Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Yes	16	44	32
No.	84	56	68
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(556)	(725)	(1,281)
(B)	(589)	(897)	(1,486)

	Sex		
	Men	Women	All
Yes	34	25	31
No.	66	75	69
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(931)	(323)	(1,254)
(B)	(1,031)	(420)	(1,451)

[a]Could be any one or more of the following: Associate, Bachelors, Masters, Doctorate, or Professional Doctorate.

More frequently, EDP graduates had begun degree work, but not completed it (Table II-7).[8] Over half (56%) reported having enrolled in at least one bachelor-level program in the "traditional" mode at some time in their past, but had not completed their studies. Nearly one-fifth (19%) reported similar experience with an Associate level program. Clearly these external degree graduates for the most part did not just "wake up" at a later-than-average time in life to the need or desire for a college degree; rather, they were using the external degree program to achieve closure to something they had sought in many cases at least once before. When we examined responses to the question concerning reasons for not having completed a college degree previously, several differences appeared by sex. Although across all respondents, "marriage or family responsibilities" was cited most frequently as the reason (by nearly half--47%--of all noncompleters), it was checked by 70 percent of the noncompleting women, as opposed to 38 percent of the noncompleting men. On the other hand, while overall over one-third (35%) indicated that military service had prevented earlier degree completion, this group consisted almost entirely of men (47% of the noncompleting men cited military service as a reason). More women than men indicated that financial problems had been a concern (41%, as opposed to 30%); overall, finances were checked by one-third. As can be seen from Table II-8, other reasons for noncompletion were involved for these respondents and other differences did exist by sex. However, it is noteworthy that very few--overall only 15 percent--indicated that they had not finished a degree because they felt that they had not needed it.

Factors Influencing Respondents' Choice of External Degree Program

Factors Influencing Choice of an External Rather than a Traditional Program

As we have seen above, these graduates for the most part were not entering the world of postsecondary education for the first time, nor were they of a chronological age or stage in life in which they were free of major responsibilities to persons other than themselves. The effects of these practical restrictions were seen very clearly in graduates' ratings of the importance of program characteristics for selecting a degree program (Table II-9). Overall, graduates considered two things very important: to be able to maintain a regular working schedule, and to have previous college coursework recognized and credited.

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[8] "Noncompleters" did not differ by sex. However, "noncompleters" slightly more frequenty than others selected behavioral or social sciences or individualized studies as their area for external study.

TABLE II-7

"NONCOMPLETERS" OF OTHER DEGREE PROGRAMS: PREVIOUS ENROLLMENT WITHOUT DEGREE COMPLETION BY LEVEL OF EDP DEGREE
(Percentage Responding "Enrolled, Did Not Completed")

Previous Enrollment In:	Level of EDP Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Traditional Associate Program	24	15	19
Traditional Bachelor Program	48	63	56
Nontraditional Associate Program	2	2	2
Nontraditional Bachelor Program	3	7	5
Number Responding (B)	(501-527) (589)	(648-692) (897)	(1,150-1,219) (1,486)

TABLE II-8

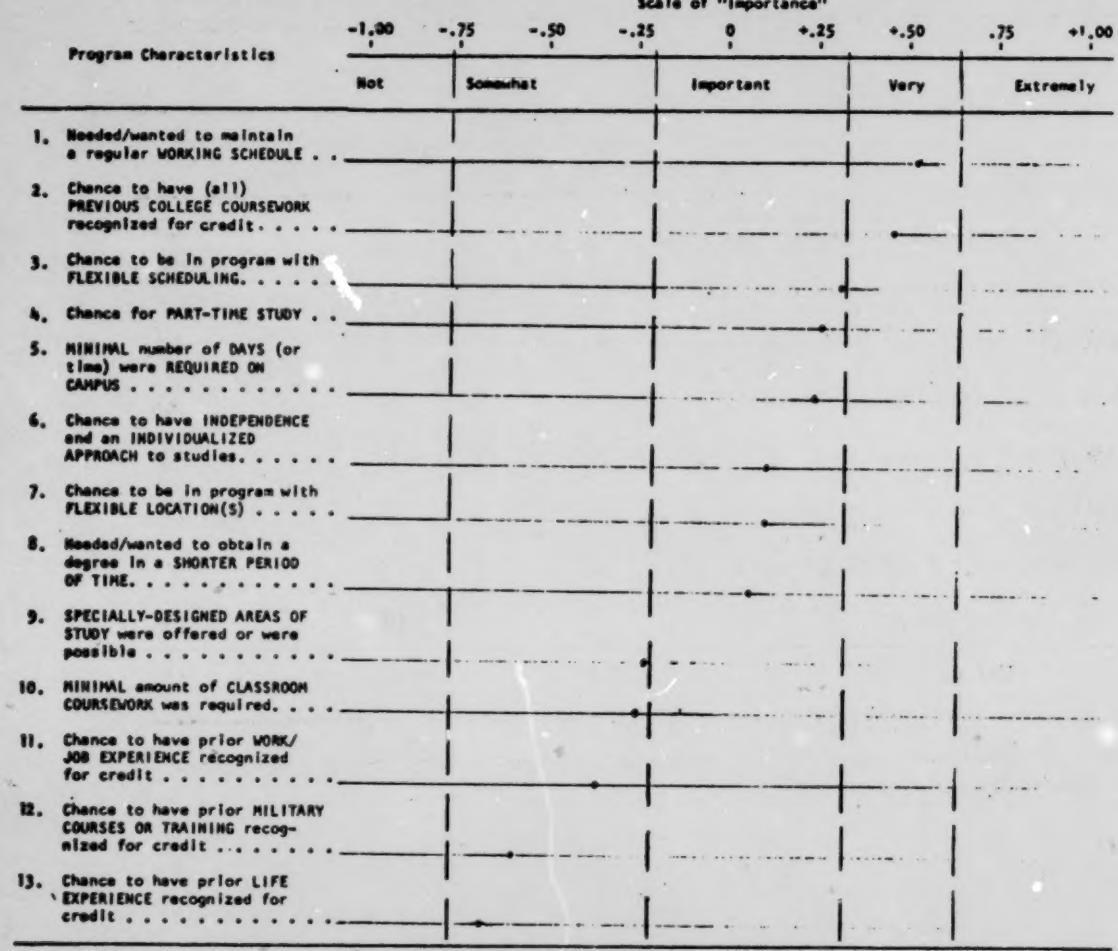
REASONS FOR NOT HAVING COMPLETED A DEGREE PROGRAM EARLIER BY SEX
(In Percentages)[a]

Reason	Sex		
	Men	Women	All
Family responsibilities	38	70	47
Did not know what I wanted. . .	36	38	37
Military service.	47	2	35
Financial problems.	30	41	33
Job was too demanding	36	18	31
Changed residences frequently .	24	15	22
Did not need a college degree .	12	25	15
Some other reason	18	36	23
(Base)	(571)	(210)	(781)

[a]Percents add to more than 100 because respondents could check more than one answer.

TABLE II-9

IMPORTANCE OF SELECTED PROGRAM CHARACTERISTICS FOR CHOOSING AN EXTERNAL RATHER THAN A TRADITIONAL DEGREE PROGRAM[a]


Scale of "Importance"
-1.00
-.75
-.50
-.25
0
+.25
+.50
.75
+1.00
Program Characteristics
Not
Somewhat
Important
Very
Extremely
1. Needed/wanted to maintain a regular WORKING SCHEDULE . .
2. Chance to have (all) PREVIOUS COLLEGE COURSEWORK recognized for credit . . . . .
3. Chance to be in program with FLEXIBLE SCHEDULING. . . . . .
4. Chance for PART-TIME STUDY . .
5. MINIMAL number of DAYS (or time) were REQUIRED ON CAMPUS . . . . . .
6. Chance to have INDEPENDENCE and an INDIVIDUALIZED APPROACH to studies. . . . . .
7. Chance to be in program with FLEXIBLE LOCATION(S) . . . . . .
8. Needed/wanted to obtain a degree in a SHORTER PERIOD OF TIME. . . . . .
9. SPECIALLY-DESIGNED AREAS OF STUDY were offered or were possible . . . . . .
10. MINIMAL amount of CLASSROOM COURSEWORK was required. . . .
11. Chance to have prior WORK/JOB EXPERIENCE recognized for credit . . . . . .
12. Chance to have prior MILITARY COURSES OR TRAINING recognized for credit . . . . . .
13. Chance to have prior LIFE EXPERIENCE recognized for credit . . . . . .

[a]This scale was constructed using the Rasch Model (see Benjamin D. Wright, "Solving Measurement Problems with the Rasch Model," Journal of Educational Measurement, Vol. 14, No. 2, Summer 1977, pp. 97-116).

The number of respondents checking each item ranged from 1227 to 1422 (base N 1486).

The importance category boundaries are:

Not/Somewhat	-.77
Somewhat/Important	-.20
Important/Very	.32
Very/Extremely	.69

The actual item scale values shown above are:

Item #	Item Scale Value	Item #	Item Scale Value	Item #	Item Scale Value
1	.52	6	.12	10	-.22
2	.44	7	.12	11	-.35
3	.31	8	.08	12	-.60
4	.27	9	-.21	13	-.68
5	.24				

Standard error for all items $< .04$.

Three other interrelated factors followed closely in importance in choosing a program: the desire for flexible scheduling and for part-time study, and for minimal time to be spent in campus-based attendance. Deemed of "medium" importance were the factors of "individualized, independent learning," flexible location, and being able to obtain the external degree in a shorter than average period of time.

The next-most-important factors (rated "somewhat" important, but close to "important") for choosing an external rather than a traditional degree program were the availability of specially designed areas of study, having a minimal amount of classroom coursework required, and the opportunity to have prior work or job experience recognized for credit. Two things are noteworthy in this grouping: first, graduates differentiated between classroom-oriented coursework (which they apparently did not object to per se) and having to attend school at a campus (which they apparently wished to avoid, as this item was rated considerably more strongly); second, while graduates seemed to be aware of the opportunity to document one's prior work experience for the purpose of obtaining academic credit, this apparently was not an option weighing heavily for most graduates.

Rated least important of all the factors--although nevertheless still considered at least somewhat important--were the chance to have prior military courses or training and the opportunity to have prior (general) life experience recognized for credit.[9]

In sum, the attraction of external degree programs over traditional programs seemed to be that these programs would recognize all (or nearly all) previous college-obtained credits, and that it would not be necessary to be present on a campus for any length of time. These two factors differentiate external degree programs from traditional ones in that while most traditional programs recognize previous college credit, there is usually a limit on the number of credits that can be transferred. Furthermore, while traditional programs often have "extended study" classes available (for example, at night or on weekends), such classes still implicitly require travel to a campus, and time away from home or from other activities, which our respondents evidently wished to avoid. Finally, some small segment of the EDP graduates considered military and work experience credit important, options not generally open in traditional programs.

In line with the graduates' ratings of important program characteristics and from their educational, occupational, and military experience, a sizable proportion--overall, 74 percent--reported having received credit in their EDP for previous college study (Table II-10).

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[9]Expectedly, men typically considered this item more important than did women: 34% of the men rated it "very" or extremely" important, as compared to 7% of the women.

TABLE II-10

EDUCATION EXPERIENCE FOR WHICH RESPONDENTS RECEIVED CREDIT AT PROGRAM ENTRY, BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage Checking Each Area)

Level of Degree	Items or Areas Recognized for Credit								
	Previous College Coursework	Work or Job Experience	Standardized Exam Scores	Military Training	Life Experience	Correspondence Courses	Associate Degree	Other	None
Associate . . . . . (B=589)	79	31	46	32	21	20	7	5	2
Bachelor . . . . . (B=897)	70	40	28	31	21	18	26	6	4
All . . . . . (B=1,486)	74	36	35	31	21	19	18	5	9

The next most common methods of obtaining credit towards completion of the external degree were mentioned by a considerably smaller proportion of the respondents; about one-third reported having received credit for work or job experience, for standardized exam scores, or for military training or study (36%, 35%, and 31%, respectively). About one-fifth (21%) mentioned credit for life experience or for correspondence courses (19%). Finally, about one-quarter of the Bachelors EDP graduates and about 7 percent of the Associates indicated they had been able to apply a previously earned Associate degree towards completion of their external studies.

Factors Influencing Choice of a Specific External Degree Program

The factor which most often influenced a graduate's choice of a given external degree program was that the program "sounded new and interesting;" half of all Associate respondents (51%) and two-fifths (41%) of the Bachelor respondents checked this as an item influencing their choice (Table II-11). "Good reputation of the program" was the second most often mentioned factor; 35 percent of all EDP graduates in the survey checked it (slightly more often Bachelors than Associates). The third most frequently mentioned factor was "lower cost" (mentioned by 31%). Associate respondents (49%) checked this item substantially more often than Bachelors (20%). Recommendations made by counselors or advisors were taken into account by over one-quarter of the EDP graduates when they selected their degree program, and again more frequently by Associates (35% mentioned it) than by Bachelors (21%). Finally, having friends in a similar program did play some part in program choice, as this was mentioned as an influence by about one-fifth of the respondents (19%).

Cost of education was clearly a factor influencing the choice of an external degree program, and understandably so, as nearly three-fifths (59%) of the EDP graduates reported financing their degree through their own current earnings (Table II-12). The G.I. Bill was of aid to about one-quarter of the graduates, but was more frequently a help to Bachelors than to Associates (29%, as compared to 16%). A close third was other personal resources (such as savings, bank loans, and so on), noted by 22 percent. Infrequently used by these graduates were other Federal monies, and especially grants, loans or scholarships from state or college/university sources, or aid from relatives or friends. Finally, as will be elaborated in Chapter IV, employers at times were a source of some financial aid; slightly less than one-third (30%) of graduates whose employers were aware of their educational pursuits reported receiving such monetary support.

TABLE II-11

FACTORS INFLUENCING CHOICE OF SPECIFIC EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage Responding "Yes")[a]

Level of Degree	Factors					
	Sounded New and Interesting	Good Reputation of Program	Lower Cost	Recommended by Counselor or Advisor	Friends in Similar Program	No Factors
Associate . . . . . (N=589)	51	32	49	35	19	11
Bachelor. . . . . (N=897)	41	37	20	21	19	10
All . . . . . (N=1,486)	45	35	31	27	19	10

[a]Percents total more than 100% because more than one answer was accepted from each respondent.

TABLE II-12

HOW EDP STUDY WAS FINANCED BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage Responding "Yes")

Level of Degree	How Financed							
	Current Earnings	GI Bill	Other Personal Resources[a]	Other Federal Money[b]	State Money[b]	Money from Relatives, Friends	College/ University Money	Other
Associate[a] . . . . . (N=589)	74	16	20	11	3	2	2	6
Bachelor . . . . . (N=897)	50	29	24	14	7	3	6	7
All. . . . . (N=1,486)	59	24	22	13	5	5	3	6

[a]Includes savings, personal bank loans, other household income.

[b]Includes scholarships, grants and loans.

CHAPTER III

THE EDP EXPERIENCE: INITIAL GOALS AND GOAL ATTAINMENT

Initial Goals

The objective assessment of any educational experience must take into account the participants' (or their surrogates') expectations, and this applies especially to the external degree experience, since the bulk of students are mature adults. As evaluation of adult postsecondary education experience has increasingly become a controversial issue in recent years, it seemed to us timely and useful to address these concerns and ask our external degree respondents about their reasons for seeking this degree at this point in their lives.[1]

Previous research into motivations among adults for pursuing postsecondary education has identified at least two central factors: the desire for career-oriented development[2] and for personal development or "rounding out." It can be seen from Table III-1 that consistently throughout the past decade, adults involved in postsecondary education--surveyed by the Bureau of the Census for the National Center for Education Statistics--have indicated that these have been the major reasons for their pursuits: over two-fifths of those surveyed in 1969, 1972, and 1975 responded that job advancement was their concern; and the proportion citing "personal or family interests" grew from one-fifth in 1969 to over one-quarter (28%) in 1975. There were also indications in the 1969 data that, while men more often than women indicated career reasons as their motivation, women were seeking postsecondary education more often as a means "to get a new job" (checked by 12% of the women responding).[3]

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[1] It should be noted that data on graduates' goals or reasons for obtaining the degree were obtained in retrospect, and hence are subject to the biases associated with this method.

[2] John Eggert, "An Examination of Goals of Potential and Actual Learners: University of Mid-American/State University of Nebraska" (Working Paper No. 1), (Lincoln, Nebraska: Office of Research and Evaluation, 1975), pp. 42-49. A third goal emerged in Eggert's research among adult learners--the specific desire to complete a college degree--which was a factor to our knowledge not previously documented.

[3] Participation in Adult Education: Final Report (1969). U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare/National Center for Education Statistics, p. 53.

TABLE III-1

REASONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN ADULT EDUCATION
(In Percentages)

Reasons	1969[b]			1972[c]	1975[c]
	Men	Women	All	All	All
To improve or advance in job.	59	30	45	43	42
For personal or family interests.	10	30	20	24	28
For general information	14	15	14	16	14
To get a new job.	9	12	11	11	12
For social or recreational reasons.	4	9	7	6	8
For community activity.	2	3	3	3	3
Other	9	10	10	8	6
(Base)[d]	(6,794)	(6,247)	(13,041)	(15,734)	(17,059)

[a]Percentages do not total to zero because more than one answer per respondent occurred.

[b]Source: Participation in Adult Education: Final Report (1969). U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare: National Center for Education Statistics, p. 53.

[c]Source: Participation in Adult Education (1975): Preliminary Tables. U.S. Department of Health Education, and Welfare: National Center for Education Statistics, Summary Table F.

[d]In thousands.

While these findings relate to adults' reasons for participating in educational experiences which are not primarily degree-granting in nature, and therefore deviate to some extent from the problem addressed in our research (again, external degree programs as included in our study all were degree-granting programs), the similarity of previous research results mentioned above encouraged us to approach EDP graduates in comparable fashion. Mindful of our charge to improve understanding of adults' reasons for completing degree program as those reasons might relate (especially) to career entry/development or to entry into higher level college education programs, we specified ten goals for our respondents to rate in the following question: "How important to you were the following goals at the time you decided to obtain this degree?" (Table III-2). Far and away the most important goal for EDP graduates was personal satisfaction--to have pursued and completed their college degree. Following in second and third place were having the external degree as a prerequisite for further study and the degree's ability to serve towards career advancement (to improve the graduate's chances of obtaining better pay or promotion). Of "medium" importance was a statement relating to career initiation--obtaining the external degree as a credential for job access--and two personal satisfaction items tapping the graduate's desire for a generally interesting, independent learning experience. Two other negotiability-related statements (improving one's job skills and ability to perform one's work, and developing a new career) were consistently deemed of lesser importance overall. Finally, relatively few graduates sought their external degree as a tool towards formal recognition of the kind or level of work they were already doing, nor did many expect their EDP to qualify them for a professional license.

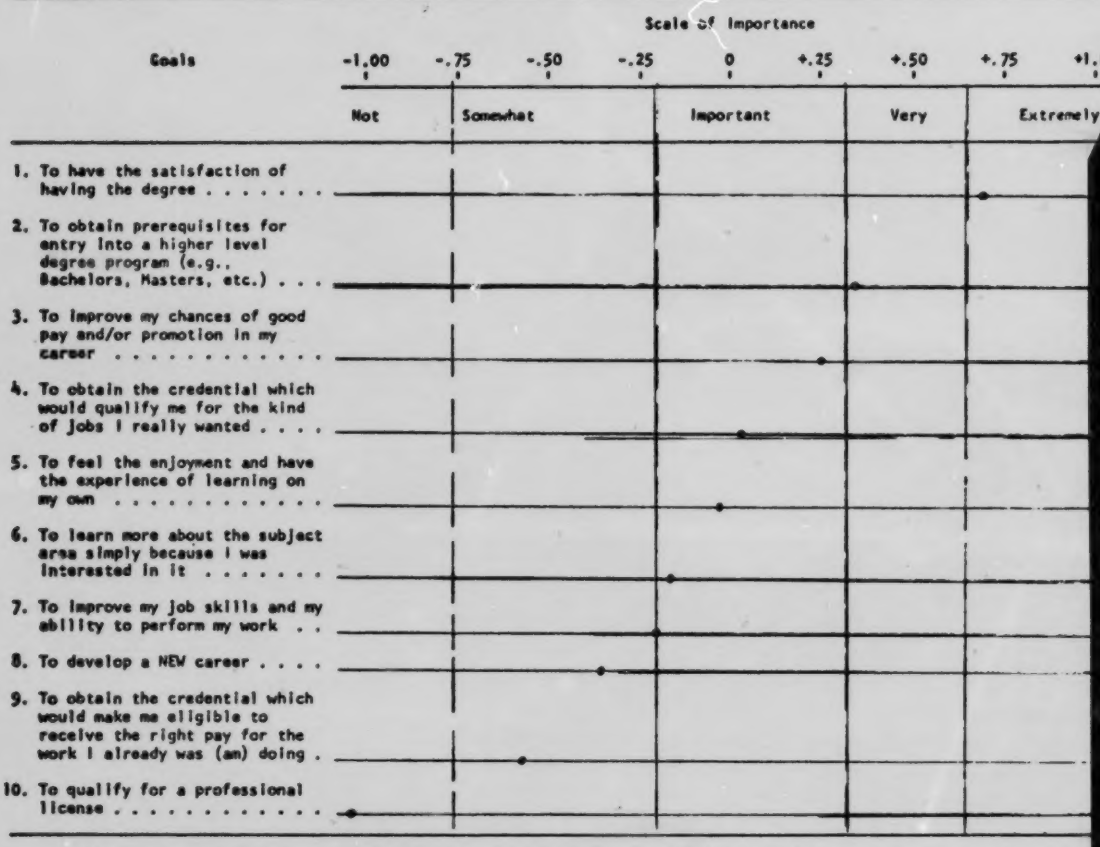
To obtain a condensed picture of the relative importance of graduates' goals, we combined the five most salient career-related items and examined proportions who rated one or more of those items as "very" or "extremely" important at the time they enrolled. As seen in Table III-3, as a group, career-related concerns emerged as primary among reasons to seek the EDP degree (collectively rated "very" or "extremely" important by 77%). Career concerns were followed closely by the desire for personal satisfaction (69%) and by wanting the EDP as a prequisite towards further education (58%).

Graduates' goals or ambitions in seeking this college degree were further clarified when sex of respondent was taken into account (Table III-4). The respondents distinguished clearly between career advancement and career initiation: 60 percent of the men responding considered it very or extremely important to "improve their chances of good pay or promotion" (50% for women), but 59 percent of the responding women felt it was either very or extremely important for the external degree "to serve as a credential to qualify them for the kind of jobs they really wanted" (45% for men)--a dramatic increase for women as compared to the earlier NCES data.

Possibly paralleling those differing stages in career development, men more frequently than women (62% as opposed to 50%) considered their external degree as a very or extremely important step towards entering a higher level degree program. Women also consistently gave higher ratings to the personal development items. The two items considered overall least important--again, items relating to career change or basic recognition for work or skill already performed--were more often rated highly by women.

TABLE III-2

IMPORTANCE OF GOALS AT ENTERING THE EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM[a]


Goals
Scale of Importance
-1.00
-.75
-.50
-.25
0
+.25
+.50
+.75
+1.
Not
Somewhat
Important
Very
Extremely
1. To have the satisfaction of having the degree . . . . . .
2. To obtain prerequisites for entry into a higher level degree program (e.g., Bachelors, Masters, etc.) . . .
3. To improve my chances of good pay and/or promotion in my career . . . . . .
4. To obtain the credential which would qualify me for the kind of jobs I really wanted . . . .
5. To feel the enjoyment and have the experience of learning on my own . . . . . .
6. To learn more about the subject area simply because I was interested in it . . . . . .
7. To improve my job skills and my ability to perform my work . .
8. To develop a NEW career . . . .
9. To obtain the credential which would make me eligible to receive the right pay for the work I already was (am) doing .
10. To qualify for a professional license . . . . . .

[a]The number of respondents checking each item ranged from 1329-1428 (base N 1486).
The importance category boundaries are:

Not/Somewhat	-.77
Somewhat/Important	-.20
Important/Very	.32
Very/Extremely	.65

The actual item scale values shown above are:

Item #	Item Scale Value	Item #	Item Scale Value	Item #	Item Scale Value
1	.70	5	-.03	8	-.36
2	.35	6	-.16	9	-.56
3	.25	7	-.20	10	-1.10
4	.04				

Standard error for all items <.04.

TABLE III-3

THE THREE GOALS AT ENTERING THE EDP MOST FREQUENTLY RATED "VERY" OR "EXTREMELY" IMPORTANT
(In Percentages)

Composite: career-related goals[a]	77
To have the satisfaction of having the degree.	69
To obtain prerequisites for entry into a higher level degree program	58
(N Ranged)	(1298-1401)
(B)	(1486)

[a]Composite was created from tabulating respondents who rated any one or more of five career-related goal items as "very" or "extremely" important.

TABLE III-4

GOALS AT ENTERING EDP BY SEX
(Percentage Responding "Very" or "Extremely Important")

Goals at Entering	Sex		
	Men	Women	All
To have the satisfaction of having the degree	68	72	69
To obtain prerequisites for entry into a higher level degree program	62	50	58
To improve my chances of good pay and/or promotion in my career . .	60	51	57
To obtain the credential which would qualify me for the kind of jobs I really wanted	45	59	49
To feel the enjoyment and have the experience of learning on my own .	37	57	43
To improve my job skills and my ability to perform my work	38	41	38
To learn more about the subject area simply because I was interested in it	31	48	36
To develop a new career	33	37	34
To obtain the credential which would make me eligible to receive the right pay for the work I already was/am doing	23	39	27
To qualify for a professional license	10	22	13
(N ranged)	(927-997)	(371-404)	(1298-1401)
(B)	(1031)	(420)	(1486)

A few of the goals were clearly related to the age group of the graduate (data not shown). The older the recipient, the more likely he or she was to report the satisfaction of having the college degree as being very or extremely important. Graduates in their peak developing years--about 25 to 45--consistently rated the career-oriented goals as more important than did those graduates who were either younger or older; they also rated the personal growth items comparatively lower.

It is noteworthy that interest in the external degree as a prerequisite for further education dropped from the overall average by only five percentage points (from 59% to 54%) for graduates who had completed their degree at age 45 or over.

Goal Attainment

Given these graduates' goals--first, the personal goal of satisfying the desire for a college degree; secondly, to become eligible to pursue higher education; and third, to improve one's standing with regard to one's career--how did the external degree experience measure up? Table III-5 demonstrates that these graduates most certainly found their external degree to have been personally satisfying; 96 percent of those who had held that a goal reported it fulfilled, and there was no differentiation by level of degree. Similarly, over three-quarters (78%) of the graduates felt that their external degree had served as the desired prerequisite to enter further degree programs (again, no differentiation by degree level). The outcome with respect to career-related goals was slightly different, although still certainly positive. Of the three career-related goals most commonly held by the respondents (better chances of good pay or promotion; obtaining the college degree as a career-initiating credential; and obtaining the degree to improve job skills and performance), the least specific of the three--general skill and performance improvement--was the goal most consistently considered satisfied (81% of those holding the goal considered it to have been reached). Those who entered the program with goals relating to career advancement or initiation did not reach them to the same extent, (61% and 55%, respectively), but Bachelor recipients were more likely than Associates to have done so (66% and 61%, versus 52% and 46%, respectively). For Associates, credentialing goals (leading to licensing or pay adjustments) were not fulfilled for the majority of respondents.

But it bears repeating that these were not always very salient goals. The picture of goal attainment sharpens particular goals as very or extremely important (Table III-6). Regardless of the specific goal held, at least over half felt it had been satisfied; the median was about three-quarters, and percentages reporting goal satisfaction ranged as high as 97 percent.[4]

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[4]It is also worth noting that respondents found it most difficult to decide whether or not they felt a goal had been reached when career concerns were involved. Percentages undecided were noticeably higher on these items.

TABLE III-5

GOAL ATTAINMENT: GRADUATES REPORTING HAVING REACHED GOALS HELD WHEN ENTERING EDP
(N = Graduates who held a particular goal)[a]

Goal Held at EDP Entry	Associates		Bachelors		All	
	Percentage Reporting Reached Goal[b]	Percentage Undecided	Percentage Reporting Reached Goal[b]	Percentage Undecided	Percentage Reporting Reached Goal[b]	Percentage Undecided
To have the satisfaction of having the degree	94	3	98	1	96	2
(N)	(534)		(789)		(1,323)	
To obtain prerequisites for entry into a higher level degree program	79	12	78	12	78	12
(N)	(510)		(700)		(1,210)	
To improve my chances of good pay and/or promotion in my career.	52	16	66	12	61	13
(N)	(432)		(660)		(1,092)	
To feel the enjoyment and have the experience of learning on my own.	88	7	93	5	91	6
(N)	(406)		(623)		(1,029)	
To obtain the credential which would qualify me for the kind of jobs I really wanted . . .	46	22	61	16	55	18
(N)	(390)		(592)		(984)	
To learn more about the subject area simply because I was interested in it	81	12	90	7	87	9
(N)	(379)		(597)		(976)	
To improve my job skills and my ability to perform my work. .	74	15	84	12	81	13
(N)	(351)		(593)		(944)	
To develop a NEW career	37	21	51	18	45	19
(N)	(303)		(458)		(761)	
To obtain the credential which would make me eligible to receive the right pay for the work I already was/am doing .	43	18	66	11	57	14
(N)	(255)		(398)		(653)	
To qualify for a professional license	23	13	52	12	41	13
(N)	(146)		(224)		(370)	

[a]Base (Associates) = 589; Base (Bachelors) = 897; Base (All) = 1,486.

[b]Percent unaccounted for is attributable to those reporting not having reached their goal.

TABLE III-6

GOAL ATTAINMENT: PROPORTION OF EOP GRADUATES WHO HAD CONSIDERED A GOAL VERY OR EXTREMELY IMPORTANT WHO REPORTED REACHING THE GOAL

	Number and Percent Who Rated Goal "Very/Extremely Important"		Percentage of those who rated Goal Very/Extremely Important and Who:		
	(N)	%	Reached Goal	Were Undecided	Did not Reach Goal
To have the satisfaction of having the degree	1,432	69	97	2	1
To obtain prerequisites for entry into a higher level degree program (e.g., Bachelors, Masters, etc.)	1,425	59	87	6	7
To improve my chances of good pay and/or promotion in my career.	1,418	57	66	12	22
To obtain the credential which would qualify me for the kind of jobs I really wanted.	1,396	49	62	12	26
To feel the enjoyment and have the experience of learning on my own	1,381	43	97	2	1
To improve my job skills and my ability to perform my work	1,381	38	90	7	3
To learn more about the subject area simply because I was interested in it	1,380	36	94	4	2
To develop a NEW career	1,371	34	54	15	31
To obtain the credential which would make me eligible to receive the right pay for the work I already was (am) doing	1,366	27	68	11	21
To qualify for a professional license	1,326	13	66	6	28
(Base)	(1,486)				

In a (perhaps unfair) effort to narrow the focus of the assessment to the single greatest benefit which the graduates' derived from the degree, they were asked the following question: "Of all the ways you may have benefited from obtaining this degree, which ONE do you feel has been the MOST important? (Check one box only.) No one benefit was selected by the majority of respondents, although a sizable proportion (38%) responded "having the degree as a stepping stone to go on for more education or training" (Table III-7). Significantly, Associate graduates more often chose this than Bachelors (48%, as opposed to 31%), indicating very clearly that the graduates themselves did not view their Associate degree as a terminal educational experience. Second most often rated as the most important benefit (by 26%) was the career-credential effect of the external degree, understandably rated most important by more Bachelor recipients (32%) than Associates (8%). A close third was the personal satisfaction of the degree, which did not differ along degree level at all (20%). It becomes clear that when respondents are forced to set priorities in their assessment of actual benefits derived from the degree (as was done through this question) intrinsic gratification--while still an important element--takes a back seat as compared to more pragmatic, career-related goals.

Age group and sex of graduates affected what was considered to have been the most important benefit of the experience. Graduates in the early stages of their career--25 to 34 years old--more often than average (33%) rated the external degree's functioning as a job credential to be most important, while older respondents, those who had often already reached most of their career development, more frequently checked the satisfaction of having the degree (32%). Women less often than men viewed as the greatest benefit the degree as a "stepping stone" to further study (32% versus 40%) and more often chose "the enjoyment and experience of learning on my own" (12% versus 4%).

Graduates' Overall Evaluation of the Degree

Table III-8 carries one simple, straightforward message: external degree graduates feel that their studies have given them a sense of achievement and have awakened them intellectually. No difference in type or magnitude of personal gain appeared by level of degree. Respondents were apparently quite realistic in their assessment of their gains in specific academic or intellectual skills; for nearly all these personal degree program as "moderate." The external degree experience seemed to serve not as a "finishing" program but rather as a refresher or stimulator for these graduates.

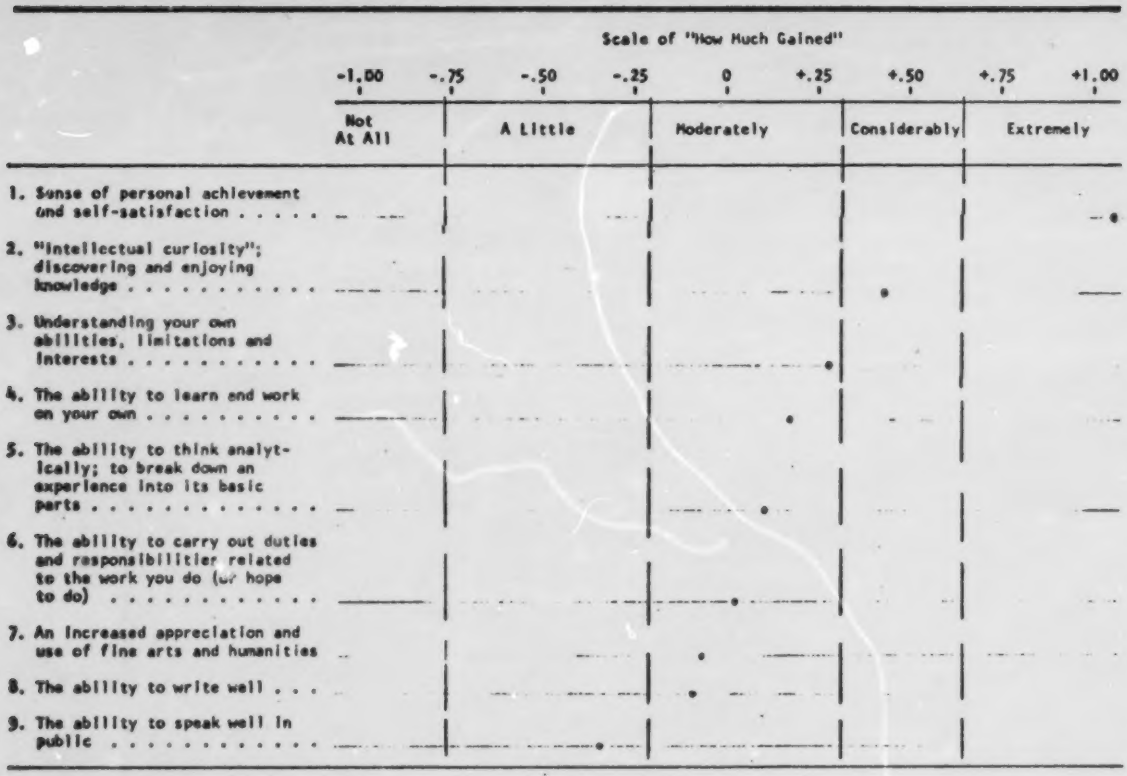
TABLE III-7

MOST IMPORTANT BENEFIT FROM OBTAINING THE EXTERNAL DEGREE
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage Responding)

Most Important Benefit	Level of Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Having the degree as a "stepping stone" to go on for more education or training . . .	48	31	38
Having the degree as a credential towards job opportunities I might not otherwise have had . .	8	32	26
The satisfaction of having the degree	20	20	20
The enjoyment and experience of learning on my own	5	7	6
Being more skilled and better at performing my work	5	7	6
Other	2	2	2
Have not benefitted from this degree	2	1	2
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(572)	(858)	(1,430)
(B)	(589)	(897)	(1,486)

TABLE III-8

DEGREE OF PERSONAL GAIN AS A DIRECT RESULT OF THE EXTERNAL DEGREE EXPERIENCE[a]


Scale of "How Much Gained"
-1.00
-.75
-.50
-.25
0
+.25
+.50
+.75
+1.00
Not At All
A Little
Moderately
Considerably
Extremely
1. Sense of personal achievement and self-satisfaction
2. "Intellectual curiosity"; discovering and enjoying knowledge
3. Understanding your own abilities, limitations and interests
4. The ability to learn and work on your own
5. The ability to think analytically; to break down an experience into its basic parts
6. The ability to carry out duties and responsibilities related to the work you do (or hope to do)
7. An increased appreciation and use of fine arts and humanities
8. The ability to write well
9. The ability to speak well in public

[a]The number of respondents checking each item ranged from 1329-1435 (base N 1486).
The gain category boundaries are:

Not At All/A Little	-.77
A Little/Moderately	-.20
Moderately/Considerably	.32
Considerably/Extremely	.65

The actual item scale values shown above are:

Item #	Item Scale Values	Item #	Item Scale Values
1	1.20	6	-.03
2	.44	7	-.15
3	.20	8	-.16
4	.18	9	-.33
5	.11		

Standard error for all items $< .04$.

In the absence of directly comparable data from studies of similar groups of students who completed traditional degree programs, a meaningful interpretation of these data with respect to the pros and cons of external degree programs is of course not possible. However, data from studies of more usual college age students suggest that outcomes for them are similar--increased "sense of competence and self-worth" probably attributable to the general experience of attending college and completing the degree.[5]

The graduates indicated their overall satisfaction with the educational experience when asked to rate their external degree against a traditional degree (Table III-9). Thirty-eight percent rated their degree as "more valuable" (a figure once again split along level of degree, with Associates lower than Bachelors).

But the graduates also recognized that they themselves might well value their external degree more highly than might other persons in their immediate lives, thus acknowledging the atmosphere of distrust surrounding many of these programs. When asked "how do you think the following people would rate your nontraditional degree in comparison with a traditional degree," ratings of "more valuable" fell somewhat below the 38 percent mentioned above. About one-quarter of the graduates (26%) felt that their spouse considered the external degree more valuable, but as the "significant other" grew more distant, ratings fell additionally. When asked how they thought their employer or co-workers would compare the two types, about equal proportions felt it would be rated "more" and "less" valuable (15% "more" versus 13% "less," and 14% "more" versus 17% "less").

Younger graduates, especially those under 25, tended to value their degree more highly than average, and also tended to expect the same higher evaluation from other persons in their lives (data not shown). Graduates in the 35-44 age group, on the other hand, consistently evaluated the degree slightly less highly than average.

Women on the average gave slightly higher ratings to the external degree program, and expected higher ratings for the degree from others than did men (data not shown).

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[5]Alexander Astin, Four Critical Years (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977), pp. 34-47. Also see John A. Creager, The American Graduate Student: A Normative Description (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, October, 1971), pp. 73-74.

TABLE III-9

GRADUATES' COMPARISON OF THE EXTERNAL DEGREE WITH A TRADITIONAL DEGREE AND EXPECTED COMPARISONS BY SIGNIFICANT OTHERS BY LEVEL OF DEGREE (Percentage Responding)[a]

	Level of Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Graduates' Own Comparison			
Percentage More Valuable	30	42	38
Percentage Less Valuable	7	8	8
Percentage Just as Valuable	60	48	53
Expected Comparison By:			
Spouse:			
Percentage More Valuable	18	29	25
Percentage Less Valuable	10	6	8
Percentage Just as Valuable	66	62	64
Relatives:			
Percentage More Valuable	15	17	16
Percentage Less Valuable	10	6	7
Percentage Just as Valuable	66	67	67
Friends:			
Percentage More Valuable	9	16	13
Percentage Less Valuable	12	7	9
Percentage Just as Valuable	61	65	63
Employer:			
Percentage More Valuable	12	14	13
Percentage Less Valuable	13	10	12
Percentage Just as Valuable	63	65	64
Co-Workers:			
Percentage More Valuable	9	14	12
Percentage Less Valuable	18	13	15
Percentage Just as Valuable	58	61	60
(N ranged)	(429-542)	(689-845)	(1,122-1,387)
(Base ranged)	(571-589)	(755-897)	(1,327-1,486)

[a]The wording of the question was as follows:

> How do you think the following people would rate your "nontraditional" degree in comparison with a "traditional" degree? (CHECK ONE BOX FOR EACH LINE.):
>
> | Less Valuable | Just As Valuable | More Valuable | Don't Know | Doesn't Apply |
> |---|---|---|---|---|

Deviations from a total of 100 percent for each set of percentages are attributable to "don't know." "Does not apply" responses were omitted from percentaging.

CHAPTER IV

NEGOTIABILITY: THE EXTERNAL DEGREE IN THE WORLD OF WORK

The "negotiability" of the external degree, or what might be thought of as its career- or occupation-oriented "market power," was a central concern of this study. While negotiability could have been measured in many ways, we chose to approach it through initially focusing on specific kinds of changes in the graduates' work-life which might reasonably have resulted from completing the external degree program, and then from these basic data, constructing measures of "negotiability."[1]

Preliminary to these efforts to examine negotiability, however, it was necessary to look at certain other basic data concerning graduates' work-life, for example, type of occupation and type of employer. We anticipated finding differences in type of occupation and type of employer, for example, according to sex of respondent or EDP degree level.

In measuring and exploring negotiability, we wished to be able to identify not only relevant characteristics and experiences of graduates, but also to estimate which ones had operated as more important, relatively speaking. It was certain that the overall "market power" of the external degree would be determined by a large number of items beyond simply sex and EDP degree level. We operationalized negotiability in four ways, and through multiple linear regression techniques examined it for several subgroups of graduates.

The first way in which we measured "negotiability" was by creating an index[2] of overall amount of job change. We examined how graduates' scores varied according to a group of selected factors of interest (for example, sex and age). The second approach was through an

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[1]Respondents were asked what had been their expectations and what had been the outcomes regarding five possible job changes as a result of the degree completion: obtaining a different job; a promotion or increase in pay or benefits; an increase in job responsibilities; an increase in job security; or an increase in status or respect from the employer and/or coworkers.

[2]The index was additive, a total score ranging from a low of zero to a high of five, created for each respondent to reflect how many of the five job changes the graduate had experienced. All types of job changes were treated equally. Prior to index construction, intercorrelations among the five job changes were examined and were found to be of sufficiently low magnitude to support use of this index.

examination of the relationships between the same group of factors and each of three kinds of job changes which we felt had emerged as most interesting--change in job held, increase in pay or a promotion, and increase in job responsibilities.

The five analytic groups for whom we examined negotiability were: all graduates who had been employed while in their external degree program; and four subgroups of that set--men, women, Associate-level graduates, and Bachelors-level graduates.

The Work Setting: Type of Employment at Two Points in Time

As noted earlier, responding external degree graduates were for the most part continually active in the labor force: about nine out of every ten were working both while pursuing their external degree and at the time of the survey (Table IV-1). Only by sex was there any differentiation in the proportion of graduates working. Women less frequently than men were employed at either point in time, although still the great majority of women (over three-quarters) worked.[3]

When queried concerning reasons[4] for not working at the time of the survey, about one-third (34%) of the 155 not in the labor force responded that they were enrolled in school. Proportions were the same for both sexes (Table IV-2). Slightly less than one-third (31%) of responding women indicated that they were not working because of voluntary involvement with home or child care (only one percent of the women claimed to be out of the labor force because of inability to locate adequate substitute home or child care). Twenty-nine percent of the men reported that they had been seeking paid employment but had not yet received any satisfactory offers; this was echoed by some, but fewer, women (12%).[5]

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[3]A recent survey of graduates from traditional college programs (class of '74-'75) conducted by Westat, Inc. (Rockville, Md.) showed that overall, 80% were employed when surveyed in Spring, 1976. Proportion employed of both sexes differed little (81% for men, 80% for women) overall, but the employment picture changed somewhat when age and sex were taken into account. Of the graduates under 30, 79% were employed, and there was little difference by sex (78% for men, 81% for women). However, of those over 30, while overall 82% were working, 93% of the men were employed as compared with 71% of the women. For further information, contact National Center for Education Statistics (DHEW), Washington, D.C. 20202.

[4]Respondents were permitted to indicate more than one reason for not working.

[5]A follow up of "traditional" Bachelors level graduates (class of 1968, surveyed in 1972) showed that 10.8% had been seeking a job but had received either no offers or only offers unsatisfactory to them. See J.T. Royer and J.A. Creager, A Profile of 1968 College Freshmen in 1972 (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1976).

TABLE IV-1

EMPLOYMENT: WHILE COMPLETING EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM AND AT TIME OF SURVEY
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE AND BY SEX
(Percentage Responding)

Employed	Level of Degree					
	Associate		Bachelor		All	
	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey
Yes	91	88	91	90	91	89
(N)	(525)	(519)	(806)	(783)	(1,331)	(1,284)
No	9	12	9	10	9	11
(N)	(51)	(70)	(77)	(86)	(128)	(156)
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(576)	(571)	(883)	(869)	(1,459)	(1,440)
(B)	(589)	(589)	(897)	(897)	(1,486)	(1,486)

	Sex					
	Men		Women		All	
	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey
Yes	97	94	78	77	91	89
(N)	(986)	(943)	(319)	(313)	(1,305)	(1,256)
No	3	6	22	23	9	11
(N)	(32)	(62)	(92)	(93)	(124)	(155)
Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
(N)	(1,018)	(1,005)	(411)	(406)	(1,429)	(1,411)
(B)	(1,031)	(1,031)	(420)	(420)	(1,486)	(1,486)

TABLE IV–2

REASONS FOR NOT BEING IN PAID EMPLOYMENT AT TIME OF SURVEY BY SEX
(Percentage of Non-Employed Responding)[a]

Reasons	Sex		
	Men	Women	All
I am/have been enrolled in school	34	33	34
I am/have been involved with home, child care voluntarily	3	31	20
I have been seeking paid employment, but have not received any satisfactory offers	29	12	19
I do not need/want paid employment	19	13	15
I have been doing volunteer work (unpaid employment outside my home)	6	16	12
I am temporarily unemployed (due to layoff, cutback, or other similar reason)	18	8	10
I would like a part-time job or one with flexible hours, but I am not able to find one	6	14	11
I have not yet obtained a professional license I need	6	10	8
Possible employers will not accept my "non-traditional" degree as a valid credential	2	1	1
Have been unable to obtain adequate substitute home, child care	0	1	1
None of the above apply	21	13	16
(Base)	(62)	(93)	(155)

[a]Respondents were permitted to indicate more than one reason.

Overall, 15 percent stated that they did not need or want paid employment at the time; this group included those not working due to retirement or illness. Men more typically than women mentioned that their unemployment was temporary (due to lay-offs or cutbacks), and women more typically than men mentioned wanting but not being able to find a part-time job or one with flexible hours (14%, as opposed to 6%). As would have been expected, given the proportions employed while pursuing the external degree, few respondents (overall, 1%) attributed their nonemployed status to the lack of "negotiability" of their external degree.

The bulk of responding graduates were employed in a professional, subprofessional, or technical position at both points in time: overall, 45 percent while studying and 54 percent at the time of the survey (Table IV-3). Interestingly, the next largest category of employment was the armed forces, which accounted for nearly one-quarter of those working while pursuing their EDP (23%) and 16 percent of those working at the time of the survey. Blue-collar employees constituted a small proportion of the survey population; about 5 percent worked in machine trades or similar positions at either point in time. Service positions--the category including police and private protective services work-- were well represented among graduates, with just under one out of ten respondents working in this area at the time of the survey or previously.

Consistently, Associate holders less frequently held professional, subprofessional, or technical positions than did holders of Bachelors degrees, and more frequently were in the armed forces or held clerical positions.

As expected, sharp differences in types of employment were found by sex (Table IV-4). About 7 out of every ten women were employed in a professional, subprofessional, or technician's job; very few were in the armed forces. Compared to men, women were more often employed in clerical or related occupations at both points in time.

Roughly one-third of responding men had been in the armed forces while pursuing their external degree, and the proportion was still very high (21%) at the time of the survey. Men more typically than women also indicated employment in the service sector (about 10% at both points in time).

Blue-collar employment was not confined to men. While about 6 percent of the employed men worked in blue-collar positions at both time periods, three percent of the women indicated similar employment at the time of survey (none were so employed while enrolled for the external degree).

TABLE IV-3

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT: WHILE COMPLETING THE EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM AND AT TIME OF SURVEY BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage Responding)

Type of Employment	Level of Degree					
	Associate		Bachelor		All	
	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey
Professional, subprofessional, technical	38	43	50	60	45	54
Armed forces	30	21	18	13	23	16
Clerical[a]	13	12	7	4	9	7
Services[b]	8	7	10	9	9	8
Sales; Lower-level Management	5	6	4	6	4	6
Machine Trades, Processing, Operatives, Structural Work	4	6	5	4	4	5
Other[e]	c	c	1	1	1	1
Unable to code	2	4	5	3	4	3
Total %	100	100	100	100	99[d]	100
(N)	(516)	(484)	(799)	(767)	(1,315)	(1,251)
(B)	(576)	(571)	(883)	(869)	(1,459)	(1,440)

[a]Includes (but not limited to) financial-related and data processing clerical.

[b]Includes (but not limited to) protective services such as police; health services; flight attendants. 72% of this category were protective services.

[c]Less than 1%.

[d]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

[e]Nonspecified government work; agriculture-related work.

TABLE IV-4

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT: WHILE COMPLETING THE EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM AND AT TIME OF SURVEY BY SEX
(Percentage Responding)

Type of Employment	Sex					
	Men		Women		All	
	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey
Professional, subprofessional, technical	38	47	67	73	45	54
Armed Forces	30	21	1	1	23	16
Clerical[a]	5	5	22	14	9	7
Services[b]	11	10	3	3	9	8
Sales; Lower-level Management	5	7	3	3	4	6
Machine Trades, Processing, Operatives, Structural Work	6	6	-	3	4	5
Other[e]	1	1	-	1	1	1
Unable to code	4	4	4	2	4	3
Total %	100	101[d]	100	100	99[d]	100
(N)	(973)	(916)	(316)	(306)	(1,289)	(1,222)
(B)	(1,018)	(1,005)	(411)	(406)	(1,429)	(1,411)

[a]Includes (but not limited to) financial related and data processing clerical.

[b]Includes (but not limited to) protective services such as police; health services; flight attendants. 72% of this category were protective services.

[c]Less than 1%.

[d]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

[e]Nonspecified government work; agriculture related work.

It can be seen from Table IV-5 that those employed in a professional or similar position while studying were least likely of all those employed to change types of occupation from "time 1" to time 2": 90 percent were still working in this type of position at the time of the survey. Those who had been in the military were rather likely to have changed (only 65% were still in the military at the time of the survey), and most frequently had moved into a professional or similar position. Similar movement occurred also among those who had been working in clerical or related positions, for only just over half (54%) remained in this same type of occupation as of the time of the survey.

It can be seen in Table IV-6 that on the whole, EDP graduates were working at the time of the survey for essentially the same kinds of employers as they were while pursuing their degree. As noted previously, the military establishment experienced the largest change--a drop from 23 percent to 16 percent--in proportion of graduates employed in that context, and was followed by a four percentage point increase (from 20% to 24%) for nonmanufacturing employers (nonspecified).

Although it was useful to know the types of positions these external degree graduates held while pursuing their degree and at the time of the survey, it also seemed desirable to refine the information by obtaining data about one further dimension of their work-life, the supervisory or administrative level at which each graduate was employed.[6] Given the very broad occupational categories available for this analysis, the addition of data on supervisory or administrative responsibilities was expected to provide a better handle for the assessment of advantages conferred by the completion of a college degree. Overall, it appeared that graduates employed in the private sector were more typically in positions with administrative responsibilities than were those in the public sector (overall, about 30% more respondents from the private sector indicated these kinds of responsibilities) (Table IV-7). Some differentiation appeared according to degree level, with Associate holders reporting these kinds of duties slightly less often. Proportion employed in essentially administrative positions did differ by sex, however. Fewer women than men had administrative responsibilities while pursuing the external degree (37%, as compared with 48%), but 20 percent more reported such responsibilities as of the time of the survey. Thus, at the time of the survey the proportion of men and women in jobs with administrative or supervisory characteristics was about the same (in fact, in the public sector, the data suggest that the proportion was higher for women). This suggests that degree completion may have led to considerable payoff for women.

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[6]Level of administrative responsibility held in one's job was one of the few survey items with a notable nonresponse rate; hence, data must be interpreted cautiously.

TABLE IV-5

NET CHANGE IN TYPE OF OCCUPATION: WHILE IN EDP AND AT TIME OF SURVEY (In Percentages)

Type of Occupation While in EDP	(N)	Proportion in Same Occupation at Time of Survey	Types of Next Occupation Most Frequently Occurring
Professional, Subprofessional, or Technical	(517)	90	Clerical; Sales or Lower Level Management
Services	(111)	81	Professional/ Subprofessional/ Technical
Sales; Lower Level Management	(52)	71	Professional/ Subprofessional/ Technical
Armed Forces	(275)	65	Professional/ Subprofessional/ Technical; Machine trades, Processing
Machine trades; processing; operatives; structural work	(50)	56	Professional/ Subprofessional/ Technical; Sales/ Management; Clerical
Clerical	(101)	54	Professional/ Subprofessional/ Technical
Other	(13)	38	Professional/ Subprofessional/ Technical
[Not able to code]	(46)	[39]	Professional/ Subprofessional/ Technical; Armed Forces

TABLE IV-6

TYPE OF EMPLOYER: WHILE IN EDP AND AT TIME OF SURVEY
(In Percentages)

Type of Employer	In EDP	At Time of Survey
Private manufacturing	9	9
Nonmanufacturing:		
Education (public and private)	13	15
Nonprofit service[a] (public and private)	13	15
Medical, legal, financial sector (public and private)	6	8
Self-employed	3	4
Government (not included elsewhere)	6	5
Armed forces	23	16
Other nonmanufacturing	20	24
Unable to code employer	7	4
Total %	100	100
(N)	(1331)	(1231)
(B)	(1331)	(1284)

[a]Service-oriented institutions such as hospitals, religious organizations, social helping organizations, libraries.

TABLE IV-7

PROPORTION OF RESPONDENTS WITH PREDOMINANTLY ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES IN JOB WHILE IN EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM AND AT TIME OF SURVEY

Employment Sector	Level of Degree					
	Associate		Bachelor		All	
	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey
Public.	24	31	42	53	35	45
Private	56	60	69	77	64	71
Both sectors.	36	43	53	63	46	56
(Base: Public & Private)	(216)	(208)	(314)	(390)	(530)	(598)
(Base: All Employed)	(576)	(571)	(883)	(869)	(1,459)	(1,440)
	Sex					
	Men		Women		All	
	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey
Public.	36	44	30	52	35	45
Private	68	73	46	63	63	70
Both sectors.	48	55	37	57	45	55
(Base: Public & Private)	(406)	(457)	(111)	(126)	(517)	(583)
(Base: All Employed)	(1,018)	(1,005)	(411)	(406)	(1,429)	(1,411)

Graduates' Attitudes towards their Jobs and their Perceptions about Employer Support for their Studies

To obtain an indication of the extent to which external degree graduates might have looked for career-oriented changes to be a result of their external degree studies, they were asked to evaluate jobs they held both before and after degree completion (Table IV-8). About one-quarter of those responding indicated that their previous job had already realized their career goals (22%), and about half (49%) indicated that this earlier job had had definite career potential. Very few--only 7 percent--indicated that it had been of a temporary nature to hold them until work they really wanted could be obtained. These figures varied little by level of degree sought. There did appear to be a slight change in attitude towards present job; more respondents felt that this job had career potential (54%).

Attitude towards job held differed by sex largely in ways which might have been expected (Table IV-9). Men slightly more frequently than women (56% versus 51%) rated their job at the time of the survey as having career potential, although the percentage had not differed much for the earlier jobs (50% versus 48%). Degree completion seems to have brought women closer to realizing their career goals; 14 percent had rated their job while pursuing the degree as realizing their goals, but 21 percent rated their present job in this fashion. This shift did not occur for men, as about the same proportions rated their job as having realized career goals at both points in time (24% and 23%). Another indication that employment meant different things to women and men was the distribution of responses to the item choice which described one's job as a way "to earn money for something else, such as education, travel, extra household income": about 4 to 5 percent of the men checked this item as applicable to their job, compared with 13 to 14 percent of the women in the survey.

A very large majority (85%) of the graduates employed while enrolled in their external degree program reported that their employer was aware of this effort. More Bachelors graduates reported that their employer knew of their studies than did Associate graduates (89% compared with 78%) (Table IV-10A). Furthermore, employers were generally supportive of these educational pursuits, although the form of their support varied. The most frequently mentioned employer response was to give "moral support," noted by over half the graduates. Slightly less than one-third of the "aware" employers reportedly supported the candidate's efforts through paying some or all of related fees (30%). Least often mentioned by graduates as support offered was a promise for better job prospects after completing the degree, noted by only 11 percent of the graduates whose employers knew of their studies. Although the extent of employer interest is noteworthy, it should be pointed out that for a small but not insignificant segment of graduates no support was forthcoming: 16 percent of the graduates indicated receiving no support of any sort from their employer.

TABLE IV-8

ATTITUDE TOWARDS JOB HELD WHILE COMPLETING THE EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM AND TOWARDS JOB AT TIME OF SURVEY BY LEVEL OF DEGREE (Percentage Responding)

Attitude	Level of Degree					
	Associate		Bachelor		All	
	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey
Has/had definite career potential. . . .	48	53	51	55	49	54
Has/had realized career goals.	21	20	23	25	22	23
Only temporary until can (could) obtain type of work really want(ed)	8	10	7	8	7	9
A job to earn money for something else (education, travel, extra household income)	7	9	6	5	6	6
A job to earn money while deciding what kind of work (I) really want to do	7	3	5	3	6	3
Other	10	6	8	4	9	5
Total %	101[a]	101[a]	100	100	99[a]	100
(N)	(509)	(469)	(675)	(643)	(1,184)	(1,112)
(B)	(576)	(571)	(883)	(869)	(1,459)	(1,440)

[a]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE IV-9

ATTITUDE TOWARDS JOB HELD WHILE COMPLETING THE EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM AND TOWARDS JOB AT TIME OF SURVEY BY SEX (Percentage Responding)

Attitude	Men		Women		All	
	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey	In EDP	At Time of Survey
Has/had definite career potential. . . .	50	56	48	51	50	55
Has/had realized career goals.	24	23	14	21	22	23
Only temporary until can (could) obtain type of work really want(ed)	7	9	10	9	8	9
A job to earn money for something else (education, travel, extra household income)	4	5	14	13	6	6
A job to earn money while deciding what kind of work (I) really want to do	6	3	4	-	6	2
Other	9	5	10	6	9	5
Total %	100	101[a]	100	100	101[a]	100
(N)	(910)	(846)	(251)	(241)	(1,161)	(1,087)
(B)	(1,018)	(1,005)	(411)	(406)	(1,429)	(1,411)

[a]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE IV-10A

EMPLOYER KNOWLEDGE ABOUT EDP STUDIES
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage of N Responding)

	Level of Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Employer did not know about studies[a]	22	11	15
Employer knew about studies	78	89	85
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(525)	(806)	(1,331)
(B)	(576)	(883)	(1,459)

TABLE 10B

SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM EMPLOYERS WHO KNEW ABOUT STUDIES
(In Percentages)[a]

	Level of Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Paid some or all of my fees	33	29	30
Promised better job prospects	12	10	11
Gave moral support	56	50	52
Gave no support	19	14	16
(N)	(407)	(720)	(1,127)
(B)	(407)	(720)	(1,127)

[a]Percentages do not total to 100% because more than one answer per respondent was permitted.

Expectations for Job-Related Changes as Compared with Outcomes

Although expectations and job-related changes experienced did differ among subgroups, on the whole, job-related changes appeared essentially consonant with graduates' expectations.[7] Overall, the change reported most frequently as expected and as occurring was perceptual: an increase in status or respect from the recipient's employer or coworkers (67% expected such a change, and 72% reported it as happening; Table IV-11). The job change which occurred next most often was an increase in responsibilities (overall, anticipated by 55% and realized by 59% of the graduates).

As Table IV-11 shows, there was a good deal of overlap between those graduates who expected changes and those who actually experienced them. Nevertheless, proportions were not a "perfect match." A sizable number of graduates expected specific tangible benefits to result from degree completion. Most often, they expected a promotion or an increase in pay or benefits, and this happened frequently, but not consistently. As seen in Table IV-11, overall, 58 percent expected and 55 percent experienced this change; 14 percent were most likely disappointed. Another tangible benefit, a change to a different job, was less often anticipated (43%) and happened with roughly the same degree of frequency, although again not to all those who expected it. An increase in job security was expected by slightly fewer than half (48%) and was reported to have happened by about the same number (46%).

In general, Associate graduates experienced job-related changes less frequently than did Bachelors graduates. This was, however, in line with their reported expectations, which were correspondingly lower as well (Table IV-12).

Men and women alike expected first and foremost that degree completion would result in an increase in status or respect from employers or co-workers, and the overwhelming majority felt that this expectation had been fulfilled (Table IV-13). But with respect to changes in their job situation, it is clear that women had higher expectations than men. Since many women graduates reportedly were employed in low paying and/or in clerical positions prior to graduation, it was logical that a high proportion expected to change to a different job (58% of the women, as compared to 38% of the men), to obtain promotions or pay increase in job responsibilities (64% of the women vs. 52% of the men), or to obtain job security (56% vs. 46%). Table IV-13 suggests that the great majority of women who held these expectations actually experienced favorable changes (and quite a few experienced them although they had not held the expectation). This is an indication that for the women in the survey, negotiability was of a very high order.

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[7]Again, one drawback to posing a retrospective question is the inability to sort out the degree to which final outcomes, whatever they might have been, may have influenced respondents' answers regarding their earlier expectations.

TABLE IV-11

JOB-RELATED CHANGES OCCURRING BY GRADUATE'S EXPECTATIONS
(Percentage Responding)

Occurance of Change and Graduate's Expectations	Job-Related Change				
	An Increase in Status or Respect from Employer and/or Coworkers	An Increase in Job Responsibilities	A Promotion or Increase in Pay or Benefits	An Increase in Job Security	A Change to A Different Job
Did not Expect					
I. And did not happen. . .	22	34	32	45	44
II. But did happen.	11	11	11	7	13
Did Expect					
III. But did not happen. . .	6	7	14	9	10
IV. And did happen.	61	48	44	39	33
Total %	100	100	101[a]	100	100
(N)	(1,111)	(1,055)	(1,081)	(1,019)	(1,060)
(B)	(1,331)	(1,331)	(1,331)	(1,331)	(1,331)

[a]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE IV-13

JOB-RELATED CHANGES AND GRADUATE'S EXPECTATIONS BY SEX
(Percentage Responding)

Occurrence of Change and Graduate's Expectations	Job-Related Change: An Increase in Status or Respect from Employer and/or Coworkers		An Increase in Job Responsibilities		A Promotion or Increase in Pay or Benefits		An Increase in Job Security		A Change to a Different Job	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
Did not Expect										
I. And did not happen. .	23	19	37	24	35	20	48	36	50	28
II. But did happen. . . .	11	11	11	12	10	13	6	8	12	14
Did Expect										
III. But did not happen. .	5	8	7	8	13	16	9	12	9	13
IV. And did happen. . . .	61	62	45	56	41	51	37	44	29	45
Total % (N Responding)	100 (820)	100 (269)	100 (780)	100 (253)	99[a] (797)	100 (264)	100 (757)	100 (241)	100 (779)	100 (262)

[a]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

TABLE IV-12

JOB-RELATED CHANGES AND GRADUATE'S EXPECTATIONS BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage Responding)

Occurance of Change and Graduate's Expectations	Job-Related Change: An Increase in Status or Respect from Employer and/or Coworkers		An Increase in Job Responsibilities		A Promotion or Increase in Pay or Benefits		An Increase in Job Security		A Change to A Different Job	
	Assoc.	Bach.	Assoc.	Bach.	Assoc.	Bach.	Assoc.	Bach.	Assoc.	Bach.
Did not Expect										
I. And did not happen. .	29	18	43	29	38	27	47	44	52	39
II. But did happen. . . .	9	12	11	11	11	11	8	6	13	13
Did Expect										
III. But did not happen. .	6	6	6	7	13	14	9	10	10	10
IV. And did happen. . . .	56	64	40	53	38	47	36	41	26	38
Total % (N Responding)	100 (418)	100 (693)	100 (398)	100 (657)	100 (409)	101[a] (672)	100 (389)	101[a] (630)	101[a] (398)	100 (662)

[a]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

Negotiability: What was Gained, by Whom, and How?

With regard to the overall negotiability experiences of all previously employed graduates (Table IV-14, Model 1), both demographic characteristics and personal attitudes of graduates emerged as influencing changes in one's worklife.[8] Associate-level recipients fared in general less well than did the "average" graduate, as also did graduates who were over 50 at the time they completed their degree and those who had been working in a nonprofit service-oriented organization. In one case, type of job held made a difference: graduates who had been employed in clerical, sales, or lower management positions were likely to improve their job situation.

Certain attitudes held by the graduates themselves were related to their negotiability experiences. For example, those who had considered job advancement or recognition to be important and who were concerned about improving their job skills via the external degree were more likely to find improvement in their job situation as a result of their efforts.

Finally, graduates who had reported receiving employer support for their degree efforts did in fact reportedly experience more negotiability, overall.

There were indications that some of the remaining demographic variables might also be related to how much overall negotiability was experienced by graduates; however, the relationships were not strong enough to be considered certain.[9] It appeared that, for example, the optimal decade to have obtained the external degree--with regard to experiencing negotiability--was the thirties, after which period negotiability declined. It also seemed that graduates who had earned their degree in general or liberal studies were least likely of all graduates to have improvements in their job situation, overall, and that applied social sciences degree recipients were most likely to have such improvements. There also were indications that graduates working in private manufacturing firms may have been--relatively speaking--those more likely to experience overall negotiability, and that employees for other types of organizations on the whole either experienced about "average" negotiability, or slightly less. Those who were in the armed forces seemed to be among those faring least well in this regard.

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[8] It should be noted that the effects of these variables on negotiability are expressed net of (or holding constant, so to speak) their possible relationships with other variables treated.

[9] Coefficients for many of the personal or demographic variables did not reach statistical significance. They may be indicative of relationships which actually exist between negotiability and such variables, but they also may be "accidental" within the data set.

TABLE IV-14

REGRESSION ESTIMATES OF INFLUENCES ON OVERALL NEGOTIABILITY[a] FOR FIVE ANALYSIS GROUPS

Model	I All Employed While in EDP		II Women Employed While in EDP		III Men Employed While in EDP		IV Associates Employed While in EDP		V Bachelors Employed While in EDP	
R	.381		.462		.435		.466		.350	
(Base N):	(1112)		(254)		(832)		(440)		(669)	
Mean Job Change Score(sd)	2.12 (1.84)		2.36 (1.96)		2.09 (1.79)		1.80 (1.81)		2.34 (1.82)	
	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.
SEX										
Men[d]	(832)	.01					(344)	-.10	(511)	.04
Women	(254)	-.02					(96)	.36[e]	(158)	-.12
LEVEL OF DEGREE										
Associate[d]	(440)	-.21[e]	(96)	.17	(330)	-.37[e]				
Bachelors[d]	(669)	.14	(158)	-.10	(502)	.24				
AGE AT EDP COMPLETION										
Less than 30 years	(335)	.12	(80)	-.05	(233)	.15	(153)	.13	(179)	.12
30 - 39 years	(375)	.23	(63)	.72	(310)	.17[e]	(150)	.16	(225)	.28
40 - 44 years	(144)	-.28	(29)	-.59	(115)	-.20	(48)	-.16	(96)	-.33
45 - 49 years[d]	(125)	-.07	(34)	-.10	(90)	-.16	(38)	-.07	(87)	-.08
50 or over	(133)	-.57[e]	(48)	-.42	(84)	-.62[e]	(51)	-.64	(82)	-.55[e]
AREA OF STUDY										
Business/Public Administration	(334)	.07	(35)	.13	(291)	.09	(90)	-.06	(241)	.14[e]
Applied Social Science	(224)	.14	(75)	.18	(145)	.01	(48)	-.05	(176)	.15[e]
General/Liberal Studies	(196)	-.17	(38)	-.68	(152)	-.05	(138)	-.03	(58)	-.45
All other areas[d]	(358)	-.06	(106)	.08	(244)	-.08	(164)	.08	(194)	-.18
TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT ORGANIZATION										
Private manufacturing[d]	(96)	.07	(11)	.84	(82)	.23	(43)	.18	(53)	.01
Education	(138)	.00	(84)	-.20	(47)	.39	(50)	-.17	(88)	.14
Nonprofit service	(152)	-.36[e]	(38)	.16	(111)	-.61[e]	(54)	-.57[e]	(98)	-.18
Medical, Legal, Financial	(66)	.03	(35)	-.55	(30)	.41	(25)	.61	(41)	-.21
Armed Forces	(262)	-.30	(18)	-.40	(254)	.14	(128)	.02	(132)	-.31
Self employed	(31)	-.07	(7)	-1.45	(24)	.38	(16)	.43	(15)	-.50
Government	(56)	-.04	(4)	.13	(52)	.02	(24)	.25	(32)	-.15
Other nonmanufacturing	(235)	-.17	(46)	.19	(184)	-.12	(90)	-.01	(144)	-.20
Did not specify	(76)	.14	(26)	-1.10	(48)	-.16	(10)	.16	(66)	.23
TYPE OF JOB										
Prof'l/Subprof'l/Technical	(493)	.07	(164)	.04	(350)	-.08	(168)	-.22	(324)	.20[e]
Clerical, Sales, Lower Management	(145)	.40[e]	(63)	.19	(79)	.08	(70)	.38	(75)	.26[e]
Services[b]	(101)	-.12	(8)	-1.06	(90)	.14	(34)	-.01	(67)	-.24
Armed forces[d]	(315)	-.27	(18)	-.67	(257)	.05	(145)	.10	(168)	-.40
Other	(58)	.03	(1)	1.56	(56)	-.05	(23)	.16	(35)	-.07
TYPE OF EDP INSTITUTION										
Freestanding	(524)	.05	(139)	-.22	(372)	.13	(304)	.05	(220)	-.09
Affiliated[d]	(588)	-.03	(115)	.26	(460)	-.11	(136)	-.11	(449)	.04
GRADUATE'S GOALS AT ENTERING EDP (INDICES)										
Desire for:[c]										
Job recognition/advancement		.11[e]		.11[e]		.12[e]		.18[e]		.07[e]
Job mobility		.00		-.06		.01		.00		.00
Improvement in job skills		.10[e]		-.02		.14[e]		.14[e]		.08
Enjoyment of learning		.03		.06		.03		.03		.03
Satisfaction of having degree		-.02		-.09		.00		-.05		-.01
EDP as prerequisite		-.03		-.04		.00		.09		-.11
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF OWN IMPROVEMENT IN ACADEMIC STUDY SKILLS[c]		.04[e]		.04		.04[e]		.01		.05[e]
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM EMPLOYER[c]		.28[e]		.26		.31[e]		.39[e]		.24[e]

[a] "Negotiability" measured by Job Change Index Score (created from Q. 32) for each respondent employed while in the external degree program. Negotiability score ranged from a low of zero (no type of job change, or negotiability) to a high of five (considerable amount of job change).

[b] Includes security and protective services; food services; non-professional health services.

[c] Continuous variables; questions were eligible to be answered by all respondents.

[d] Significance not ascertainable for these categories.

[e] Approached significance at $p < .05$

* $p < .05$

The trend appeared for graduates from free-standing institutions to have experienced slightly more negotiability than those from affiliated institutions, but again, this was not a dependable result of the analysis.

The above relationships--or in some cases, the seeming lack of a relationship when looking at the data across all graduates--changed when negotiability experiences of men and women were examined separately (Table IV-14, Models II and III). Women appeared to experience more negotiability overall than did men. For women, it was unclear as to whether degree level made a difference (although the trend, which was not strong enough to be "certain," statistically speaking, was for women graduates at the associate level to have benefited more than women bachelor-level graduates). Level of degree did matter, however, for men: an Associate degree gained comparatively less for the male graduate than did a Bachelor's degree.

Reported negotiability appeared to have changed more for women according to age group than it did for men (the data for women, however, did not quite reach statistical significance). The decade of 30-39 seemed to be a better time for career improvement for women than men, but after that period, negotiability may have dropped more for women.than for men.

The effects of area of study were unclear when examined for these two groups, although it may have been that particularly for women, negotiability was less for graduates in general or liberal studies.

The analysis for effects of type of employing organization yielded only one statistically reliable finding: that men employed in nonprofit service organizations, compared with other employed men, did not fare very well with regard to negotiability. However, one curious trend emerged which might bear watching in further research: wherever women experienced relatively more negotiability, men seemed not to, and vice-versa.

For both sexes, it appeared that (again, this was a trend) negotiability may have been highest for those who held low-level jobs while pursuing their external degree. Women had slightly more job change if they had held a clerical or related position, and men if they were employed in a service position.

Of all the attitudinal indicators relating to negotiability, only one was strong enough for both men and women to be reliable--for both sexes, negotiability was higher if the graduates had expressed a desire for job recognition or advancement. For men, two other attitudinal indicators emerged as dependably positively related to negotiability--having indicated a desire for improving one's job skills, and having reported receiving support from one's employer for one's studies.

The last set of subgroup comparisons--overall negotiability viewed by level of degree (Table IV-14, Models IV and V)--yielded only a few statistically reliable relationships, although some interesting trends worthy of future investigation did emerge. Age effects appeared to be about the same, regardless of degree. Negotiability appeared to improve slightly until 40, after which point it dropped; but age was the only factor which seemed to operate the same for both degree levels. On other demographic variables, it appeared to be that what was related to an improvement in negotiability for one degree level was at the time related to a decrease in negotiability for the other degree level--but it must be remembered that this was only a trend in relationships and was not for certain. Bachelors recipients fared comparatively better with a degree in either business administration or the applied social sciences (Associate recipients by and large did not); Bachelors recipients fared comparatively better if they had been working in an education setting, but not predictably well in other employment settings (Associate recipients did not fare well in education or nonprofit service settings, but did about "average" or better compared with other Associate recipients in other settings); Bachelors recipients fared better than average for their group if they had been working as a professional or as a clerical or related employee, and worse than their average if they had been in another occupation (Associate recipients experienced less negotiability than average for their group if they had been working as a professional, but comparatively more if they had worked as a clerical or related employee). Finally, having received one's degree from affiliated institution may have had opposite effects, depending upon degree level: it may have been a very slight help to a Bachelors graduate and a slight hindrance to an Associate graduate--but these were, again, not certain, statistically.

There appeared to be few differences between Associates and Bachelors graduates when negotiability was examined according to attitudinal variables. For both groups, negotiability increased slightly if the graduate had expressed a desire for job recognition or advancement, or for improvement in his or her job skills, or had reported having received some type of support for his or her studies from the employer.

Negotiability: A Closer Look at Three Indicators

As noted above, we also examined these personal and demographic variables as they related to three specific indicators of negotiability: a graduate's receiving an increase in job responsibilities as a result of completing the external degree, receiving a pay increase or promotion, and changing jobs altogether (Tables IV-15, 16, and 17).

For the three types of negotiability, sex and level of degree effects were consistent, and of the two, the effect of degree level appeared stronger. Among subgroups, women more frequently than men experienced negotiability (regardless of which of the three types) by a range of about 5 to 8 percentage points, and Bachelors recipients more frequently than Associates by a range of about 9 to 14 percentage points.

Factors Related to Receiving Job Responsibility Increases.--Overall, 45 percent of all respondents employed while studying reported an increase in job responsibilities as a result of completing the degree (Table 15, Model I);[10] this figure increased for Bachelors graduates but decreased for Associates (Models IV and V). Overall, a graduate was more likely to experience an increase in job responsibilities if she or he were under 40 at the time of completing the degree, but less likely if older. This relationship was very noticeable for all the subgroups except Associate recipients.

Area of study was not reliably related to increases or decreases in proportion reporting changes in job responsibilities, by and large, although some trends appeared. Women general or liberal studies graduates experienced a job responsibility increase comparatively less frequently than did other women graduates. It was not certain whether this relationship existed for men (Models II and III). In the area of business or public administration, the Bachelors degree seemed to accompany this kind of negotiability benefit; the opposite seemed true for the Associate degree in this study area. Applied social sciences graduates at the Associate level appeared to have fared better than other Associate graduates, but at the Bachelors level graduates in this study area fared only about average for their subgroup.

For job responsibilities overall, graduates seemed more frequently to have experienced an increase if they had been employed in a private manufacturing concern, and comparatively less if employed in another type of organization. Graduates who had worked in the education sector experienced less than "average" increase in job responsibilities, and this appeared to be true for all the subgroups except for men. Similarly, for all subgroups, negotiability of this type was lower than the overall average for those working in the nonprofit service sector. Women appeared to have experienced comparatively less improvement in their job responsibilities than did men if they had been employed in the medical/legal/financial sector. Similarly, Bachelors graduates gained comparatively less in that sector as well. The only type of employment situation in which the Associate degree was comparatively more negotiable (in job responsibilities) than the Bachelors was in the medical/legal/financial world.

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[10] It should be pointed out that in Tables IV-15, 16, and 17, the percentage of respondents within each subgroup experiencing a given type of negotiability may differ slightly from the percentage indicated in earlier tables because of insufficient data for some cases to be included in the regression calculations.

TABLE IV-15

REGRESSION ESTIMATES OF INFLUENCES ON RECEIVING AN INCREASE IN JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AS A RESULT OF COMPLETING THE EXTERNAL DEGREE

Model	I All Graduates Employed While in EDP		II Women Employed While in EDP		III Men Employed While in EDP		IV Associates Employed While in EDP		V Bachelors Employed While in EDP	
R (Base N):	.386 (1112)		.447 (254)		.426 (832)		.456 (440)		.386 (669)	
Mean (%) Receiving Responsibility Increase	.45		.49		.44		.37		.51	
	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.
SEX										
Men[a]	(858)	-.01					(344)	-.02	(511)	.00
Women	(254)	.02					(96)	.08	(158)	.01
LEVEL OF DEGREE										
Associate	(440)	-.05[c]	(96)	.05	(330)	-.09[c]				
Bachelor[a]	(672)	.04	(158)	-.03	(502)	.06				
AGE AT EDP COMPLETION										
Less than 30 years	(335)	.04[d]	(80)	-.01	(233)	.04[d]	(153)	.01	(179)	.07[c]
30 - 35 years	(375)	.07[c]	(63)	.19[c]	(310)	.06[c]	(150)	.05	(225)	.08[c]
40 - 44 years	(144)	-.06	(29)	-.18	(115)	-.03	(48)	.00	(96)	-.08
45 - 49 years[b]	(125)	-.05	(34)	-.05	(90)	-.06	(38)	-.05	(87)	-.06
50 or over	(133)	-.18[c]	(48)	-.09	(84)	-.22[c]	(51)	-.15	(82)	-.20[d]
AREA OF STUDY										
Business/Public Administration	(334)	.02	(35)	.07	(291)	.02	(90)	-.07	(241)	.06[d]
Applied Social Sciences	(224)	.04	(75)	.06	(145)	.01	(48)	.13	(176)	.01
General/Liberal studies	(196)	-.06	(58)	-.22[c]	(152)	-.03	(138)	-.02	(58)	-.15
All other areas[a]	(358)	-.01	(106)	.02	(244)	-.02	(164)	.02	(194)	-.04
TYPE OF EMPLOYING ORGANIZATION										
Private manufacturing[a]	(96)	.07	(11)	.09	(83)	.09	(43)	.03	(53)	.10
Education	(138)	-.06[c]	(84)	-.08	(47)	.01	(50)	-.07	(88)	-.06[d]
Nonprofit service	(152)	-.06[d]	(38)	-.12	(111)	-.05[c]	(54)	-.10	(98)	-.04
Medical/Legal/Financial	(66)	-.04	(35)	-.21[d]	(30)	.10	(25)	.16	(41)	-.14[c]
Armed forces	(262)	-.10	(18)	-.17	(254)	-.06	(128)	-.03	(132)	-.12
Self employed	(31)	-.05	(7)	-.43[d]	(24)	.05	(16)	.07	(15)	-.16[d]
Government	(56)	-.02	(4)	.03	(52)	-.02	(24)	.01	(32)	-.02
Other nonmanufacturing	(235)	-.04[d]	(46)	-.07	(184)	-.03[c]	(90)	-.03	(144)	-.03[d]
Did not specify	(76)	.01	(26)	.31	(48)	-.07[d]	(10)	.07	(66)	.02
TYPE OF JOB										
Prof'l/Subprof'l/Technical	(443)	.02[d]	(164)	.00	(316)	.01	(168)	-.05	(324)	.06[c]
Clerical, Sales, Lower Management	(145)	.16[c]	(63)	.08[d]	(79)	.11[d]	(70)	.17	(75)	.09[c]
Services[a]	(101)	-.04	(8)	.11	(90)	.04	(34)	-.10	(67)	-.04
Armed forces[a]	(315)	-.10	(18)	-.21	(291)	-.07	(145)	-.01	(161)	-.15
Other	(58)	.06[d]	(1)	.50	(56)	.07	(23)	.09	(35)	.03
TYPE OF EDP INSTITUTION										
Freestanding	(534)	.01	(139)	-.04	(372)	.02	(304)	.01	(229)	-.05
Affiliated[a]	(588)	-.01	(115)	.04	(460)	-.02	(136)	-.03	(449)	.02
GRADUATE'S GOALS AT ENTERING EDP (INDICES):										
Desire for:[b]										
Job recognition/Advancement		.03[c]		.01		.03[c]		.04[c]		.01
Job mobility		.00		-.02		.00		.00		-.01
Improvement in job skills		.03[c]		.01		.04[c]		.04[c]		.03
Enjoyment of learning		.01		.01		.01		.01		.00[d]
Satisfaction of having degree		.00		.00		.00		-.02		-.03[c]
EDP as prerequisite		-.01		.00		-.01		.01		.02
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF OWN IMPROVEMENT IN ACADEMIC STUDY SKILLS[b]		.01[c]		.01		.01[c]		.00		.03
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM EMPLOYER[b]		.00[c]		.00		.03[c]		.10[c]		.07[c]

[a] Includes security and protective services; food services; nonprofessional health services.

[b] Continuous variables; questions were eligible to be answered by all respondents.

[c] Significance not ascertainable for these categories.

[d] Approached significance at $p \leq .05$

[e] $p \leq .05$

Graduates who had held positions as clerical employees were far more likely than average--by about 16 percentage points--to report an increase in job responsibilities. For both professional and clerical employees, there was no difference appearing between men and women's experiences, but there did seem to be differences according to degree level (Associate recipients in professional positions experienced less frequently than average an increase in responsibilities than did other Associate recipients, but those in clerical positions comparatively more (about 14%)).

Although the effects were not strong enough statistically to be dependable, there appeared a trend that women who had graduated from affiliated institutions gained slightly more than did men from affiliated institutions, but if a woman graduated from a free-standing program institution, she reportedly experienced slightly less frequently an increase in job responsibilities. Nearly in opposition, the trend appeared for an Associate recipient to have experienced on the average slightly less often an increase in job responsibilities if s/he graduated from an affiliated institution, but the reverse was the case for the Bachelors level graduate.

Attitudinal factors appeared moderately but clearly related to whether (or how much) responsibility change was experienced. More for men than for women, citing career-related goals for the external degree endeavor predicted receiving a responsibility increase, and the same relationship held for Associates (but to a slightly lesser degree). It also appeared that graduates who had expressed as one of their goals "satisfaction of having the degree" were slightly less likely (by about two to three percentage points) to report experiencing responsibility increases.

For all graduates and across all subgroups, those who reported receiving employer support for their external studies were between six and ten percentage points more likely than the average to be given a responsibility increase upon completing the degree.

Factors Related to Receiving a Promotion or Pay Increase--The proportion of all previously-working respondents who reported that completion of the external degree led to a pay increase or a promotion was about the same as for increases in job responsibilities (43% vs. 45%, Table IV-16).[11] The relationship between age at completing the degree and receiving a pay increase or a promotion was about the same as the age relationships with the negotiability indicator discussed just above, that is, graduates under about 40 typically experienced this kind of job improvement more frequently than average, and if over 40, typically less frequently than average. The decade 30-39 was especially opportune for women graduates and Bachelors graduates as well.

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[11] It should be noted that not necessarily the same individuals checked these categories of job changes.

TABLE IV-16

REGRESSION ESTIMATES OF INFLUENCES ON RECEIVING A PROMOTION OR PAY INCREASE AS A RESULT OF COMPLETING THE EXTERNAL DEGREE

Model	I All Graduates Employed While in EDP		II Women Graduates Employed While in EDP		III Men Graduates Employed While in EDP		IV Associate Graduates Employed While in EDP		V Bachelor Graduates Employed While in EDP	
R	.339		.467		.379		.409		.336	
(Base N): Mean (=) Promoted or Receiving Pay Increase	(1112) .43		(254) .48		(832) .41		(440) .37		(669) .46	
	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.
SEX										
Men[c]	(858)	-.01					(344)	-.04	(511)	.00
Women	(254)	.02					(96)	.13*	(158)	-.01
LEVEL OF DEGREE										
Associate	(440)	-.04[d]	(96)	.07	(323)	-.07*				
Bachelors[c]	(672)	.03	(158)	-.04	(509)	.05				
AGE AT EDP COMPLETION										
Less than 30 years	(335)	.02	(80)	-.03	(233)	.03	(153)	.01	(179)	.03
30 - 39 years	(375)	.07[d]	(63)	.18[d]	(310)	.06[d]	(150)	.05	(225)	.09[d]
40 - 44 years	(144)	-.07	(29)	-.10	(115)	-.07	(48)	-.02	(96)	-.11
45 - 49 years[c]	(125)	-.01	(34)	-.01	(90)	-.04	(38)	-.01	(87)	-.02
50 or over	(133)	-.15*	(48)	-.11	(84)	-.17[d]	(51)	-.16	(82)	-.16[d]
AREA OF STUDY										
Business/Public Administration	(334)	.02	(35)	.03	(291)	.02	(90)	-.01	(241)	.04*
Applied Social Sciences	(224)	.00	(75)	.04	(145)	-.06	(48)	-.10	(176)	.02
General/Liberal studies	(196)	.00	(38)	-.10	(152)	.03	(138)	.03	(58)	-.09
All other areas[c]	(358)	-.02	(106)	.00	(244)	-.01	(164)	.01	(194)	-.04
TYPE OF EMPLOYING ORGANIZATION										
Private manufacturing[c]	(96)	.08	(11)	.05	(82)	.13	(43)	.06	(53)	.10
Education	(138)	.05	(84)	-.03	(47)	.15*	(50)	.02	(88)	.07
Nonprofit service	(152)	-.12*	(38)	.02	(111)	-.19	(54)	-.07	(98)	-.13*
Medical/Legal/Financial	(66)	-.01	(35)	-.13	(30)	.07	(25)	.09	(41)	-.04
Armed forces	(362)	.01	(18)	-.01	(254)	.02	(128)	-.03	(132)	-.01
Self employed	(31)	.00	(7)	-.43*	(24)	.12	(16)	.11	(15)	-.08
Government	(56)	-.03	(4)	-.23	(52)	.01	(24)	.00	(32)	-.03
Other nonmanufacturing	(235)	-.01*	(46)	.06	(184)	.01*	(90)	.00	(144)	.00
Did not specify	(76)	.08	(26)	.27	(48)	.01	(10)	.11	(66)	.10
TYPE OF JOB										
Prof'l/Subprof'l/Technical	(493)	-.01	(164)	.01	(316)	-.03	(168)	-.06	(324)	.02
Clerical, Sales, Lower Management	(145)	.07	(63)	.03	(79)	.01	(70)	.02	(75)	.06
Services[b]	(101)	.08	(8)	-.22	(90)	.19*	(34)	.13	(67)	.05
Armed forces[c]	(315)	-.05	(18)	-.09	(291)	-.03	(145)	.03	(168)	-.08
Other	(58)	-.01	(1)	.34	(56)	-.01	(23)	.00	(35)	-.02
TYPE OF EDP INSTITUTION										
Freestanding	(524)	.01	(139)	-.01	(372)	.02	(304)	.02	(220)	-.03
Affiliated[c]	(588)	-.01	(115)	.01	(460)	-.02	(136)	-.05	(449)	.02
GRADUATE'S GOALS AT ENTERING EDP										
Desire for:[b]										
Job recognition/advancement		.04*		.04*		.04		.06*		.02*
Job mobility		-.01*		-.03*		-.01		-.01		-.01
Improvement in job skills		.02[d]		-.02		.03		.02		.02
Enjoyment of learning		.00		.02		.00		.00		.00
Satisfaction of having degree		.00		-.03		.01		-.02		.01
EDP as prerequisite		-.01		-.03		.01		.02		-.02[d]
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF OWN IMPROVEMENT IN ACADEMIC STUDY SKILLS[b]		.00		.00		.00		.00		.00
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM EMPLOYER[b]		.06*		.02		.07		.08*		.05*

[a] Includes security and protective services; food services; nonprofessional health services.

[b] Continuous variables; questions were eligible to be answered by all respondents.

[c] Significance not ascertainable for these categories.

[d] Approached significance at $p \leq .05$

* $p \leq .05$

Area of study made little reliable difference with regard to receiving pay increases or promotions, although the same trends appeared as with job responsibility increases. Bachelors level business/public administration graduates were the only ones for whom this second kind of negotiability seemed to appear: of graduates at this level and in this study area, it would be predicted that about 50 percent would experience this kind of negotiability after completing the external degree, as compared with about 46 percent overall for Bachelors graduates. There were indications in the data that at the Associate level, a degree in the applied social sciences may have placed the recipient comparatively at a disadvantage, although these figures were not statistically significant.

Type of employing organization was dependably related to a graduate's receiving a pay increase or promotion in only a few situations. Across all subgroups, those employed in nonprofit services would be reasonably less likely than the overall average to have received this kind of job improvement, and it appeared that this may have been more often the case for men than for women. Also with regard to men, although overall in the education sector no reliable relationship emerged concerning this aspect of negotiability, men employed in the education sector were notably more likely than their group average to benefit from their degree in receiving pay increases or promotions. No particularly important differences emerged with regard to women or Associate graduates in the various sectors of employment; however, Bachelors graduates employed in nonprofit service organizations were at a relative disadvantage compared with their peers employed elsewhere.

Type of job held appeared to be meaningfully related to pay/promotion negotiability for only one subgroup: men who had been working in service occupations such as police and security services, for whom the degree was a benefit. As seen previously with regard to type of job and other kinds of negotiability experiences, for pay/promotions there appeared a trend for graduates working as clerical or service personnel to benefit, and for those in the armed forces to experience below average negotiability.

The type of the institution which had sponsored the degree program (free-standing or affiliated) did not appear to be related to this kind of negotiability.

Finally, those who considered career goals important reasons for completing their external degree were more likely to receive a pay increase or a promotion upon completing the degree. And again, graduates who reported receiving support from their employer during their studies were more likely to experience pay-offs in status or remuneration.

Factors Relating to Changing Jobs.--Compared with the other two indicators discussed in this section--increased job responsibilities and pay increases or promotions--job changes were reported by smaller proportions of graduates (Table IV-17). In this analysis, 33 percent of those who had been working while studying reportedly changed jobs as a result of completing their external degree. Age did not have the "peaking" effect as seen with other types of negotiability, nor did area of study, type of employing organization, or type of host institution seem to be related to changing in any perceptible, systematic fashion. Profession/occupation, however, did seem to be related, and in a reasonably logical way. Those who had worked as professionals or clerical personnel more frequently experienced this negotiability. Among professionals, this was especially true for Bachelors graduates, and among clerical personnel, this was especially true for Associate graduates. Notably, among Associate graduates, having received employer support during one's studies was positively related to changing jobs.

Negotiability: Where are the Payoffs?

To get a better picture of the particular situations in which external degree graduates apparently found their degree most negotiable, high and low "payoff" indicators are summarized in Tables IV-18 and 19. It can be seen that when negotiability is examined by sex, age of graduate and type of employing organization came into importance; but when negotiability if examined by degree level, type of job held and having received employer support were most frequently noticeably important.

For men, the external degree appeared most useful towards obtaining increased job responsibilities, particularly if the recipient was in his thirties. With regard to pay increases or promotions, men also seemed to profit if they had been working as a service employee or in an educational organization while pursuing their degree. So far as negotiability for men was concerned, the external degree seemed the least useful for those over 50 or those who had been working in a nonprofit service organization.

For women, few factors were significantly related to the levels of negotiability they experienced, which were consistently higher than those experienced by men. One relationship was obvious: women in their thirties were more likely than women of other ages to experience an increase in job responsibilities.

Similar to the situation with women, for Associate graduates, few factors appeared to affect negotiability experienced significantly. The one factor which emerged as consistently important for graduates at this level was to have received employer support during one's studies.

Finally, with respect to Bachelors graduates, for two of the three kinds of negotiability, working either as a professional or as a clerical or related employee accompanied improvements. Additionally, as with the case for Associate graduates, having received employer support was consistently predictive of improvements in one's job situation.

TABLE IV-17

REGRESSION ESTIMATES OF INFLUENCES ON CHANGING JOBS AS A RESULT OF COMPLETING THE EXTERNAL DEGREE

Model	I All Graduates Employed While in EDP		II Women Employed While in EDP		III Men Employed While in EDP		IV Associates Employed While in EDP		V Bachelors Employed While in EDP	
R	.287		.363		.307		.366		.369	
(Base N):	(1112)		(254)		(832)		(448)		(669)	
Mean (%) Job Changes:	.33		.39		.31		.36		.38	
	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.
SEX										
Men[c]	(858)	-.01					(344)	-.02	(511)	-.01
Women	(254)	.03					(96)	.07	(155)	.02
LEVEL OF DEGREE										
Associate	(672)	-.05[e]	(96)	.02	(323)	-.08[e]				
Bachelor[c]	(440)	.03	(158)	-.01	(509)	.05				
AGE AT EDP COMPLETION										
Less than 30 years	(335)	.02	(80)	-.05	(233)	.03	(153)	.00	(179)	.05
30 - 39 years	(375)	.01	(63)	.14	(310)	.00	(150)	.02	(225)	.01
40 - 44 years	(144)	.01	(29)	-.02	(115)	.03	(48)	.05	(96)	.00
45 - 49 years[c]	(125)	.03	(34)	.00	(90)	.01	(38)	.03	(87)	.02
50 or over	(133)	-.14[e]	(48)	-.10	(84)	-.15[e]	(51)	-.13	(82)	-.16[e]
AREA OF STUDY										
Business/Public Administration	(334)	.01	(35)	-.02	(291)	.01	(90)	-.02	(241)	.03[d]
Applied Social Sciences	(224)	.03	(75)	.08	(145)	-.02	(48)	-.03	(176)	.03
General/Liberal studies	(196)	-.03	(38)	-.14	(152)	-.00	(138)	-.01	(58)	-.05
All other areas[c]	(358)	-.01	(106)	.00	(344)	.00	(164)	.03	(194)	-.05
TYPE OF EMPLOYING ORGANIZATION										
Private manufacturing[c]	(96)	.01	(11)	-.03	(82)	.04	(43)	-.01	(53)	.03
Education	(138)	-.08	(84)	-.08	(47)	.01	(50)	-.10	(88)	-.06
Nonprofit service	(122)	-.10[d]	(38)	.04	(111)	-.15[e]	(54)	-.19[d]	(98)	-.04
Medical/Legal/Financial	(66)	-.09	(35)	-.18	(30)	-.02	(25)	.01	(41)	-.14[d]
Armed forces	(262)	-.14	(18)	-.60	(254)	-.07	(128)	-.09	(132)	-.16
Self employed	(31)	.01	(7)	-.18	(24)	.08	(16)	.13	(15)	-.11
Government	(56)	.07	(4)	-.03	(52)	.09	(24)	.13	(32)	.02
Other nonmanufacturing	(235)	-.06	(46)	.08	(184)	-.06[d]	(90)	-.02	(144)	-.09
Did not specify	(76)	.06	(26)	.28	(48)	.01	(10)	.00	(66)	.10
TYPE OF JOB										
Prof'l/Subprof'l/Technical	(493)	.06[e]	(164)	.02	(316)	.04	(168)	.01	(324)	.09[e]
Clerical, sales, lower management	(145)	.11[e]	(63)	.04[e]	(79)	.08[d]	(70)	.15[e]	(75)	.05[e]
Services[a]	(101)	-.04	(8)	-.14	(90)	.03	(34)	.09	(67)	-.11
Armed forces[c]	(315)	-.14	(18)	-.30	(291)	-.08	(145)	-.11	(168)	-.16
Other	(58)	.01[d]	(1)	.35	(56)	.02	(23)	.03	(35)	.01
TYPE OF EDP INSTITUTION										
Freestanding	(534)	.00	(139)	-.04	(372)	.01	(304)	.00	(220)	-.03
Affiliated[c]	(588)	.00	(115)	.05	(460)	-.01	(136)	.00	(449)	.01
GRADUATE'S GOALS AT ENTERING EDP (INDICES):										
Desire for:[b]										
Job recognition/advancement		.01		.00		.01[d]		.02		.00
Job mobility		.01[e]		.00		.02[e]		.03[e]		.01
Improvement in job skills		.01		-.01		.02		.02		.00
Enjoyment of learning		.02[e]		.01		.02[e]		.01		.02[e]
Satisfaction of having degree		-.03		-.05[d]		-.02		-.02		-.03[e]
EDP as prerequisite		.01[e]		.01		.01		.02		.00
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF OWN IMPROVEMENT IN ACADEMIC STUDY SKILLS[b]		.00		.01		-.01		.00		.00
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM EMPLOYER[b]		.02		.01		.03		.08[e]		-.01

[a] Includes security and protective services; food services; nonprofessional health services.

[b] Continuous variables; questions were eligible to be answered by all respondents.

[c] Significance not ascertainable for these categories.

[d] Approached significance at $p \leq .05$

[e] $p \leq .05$

TABLE IV-18

NEGOTIABILITY. INDICATORS OF HIGH AND LOW PAY-OFF FOR MEN AND WOMEN

(Average %)	Increase in Job Responsibility		Pay Increase or Promotion		Change Jobs	
	Men	Women	Men	Women	Men	Women
	(44)	(49)	(41)	(48)	(31)	(39)
LEVEL OF DEGREE						
Associate	-		-		-	
Bachelors						
AGE AT EDP COMPLETION						
Less than 30						
30 - 39	+	++				
40 - 44						
45 - 49						
50 or over	--				--	
AREA OF STUDY						
Business/Public Administration						
Applied Social Sciences						
General/Liberal Studies		--				
All other areas						
TYPE OF EMPLOYING ORGANIZATION						
Private Manufacturing						
Education			++			
Nonprofit Service	-				--	
Medical/Legal/Financial						
Armed Forces						
Self Employed				--		
Government						
Other Nonmanufacturing						
TYPE OF JOB						
Prof'l/Subprof'l/Technical						
Clerical, Sales, Lower Management						
Services			++			
Armed Forces						
Other						
ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT	+					

KEY:

"+" Indicates group average plus 5-10 percentage points.

"++" Indicates group average plus 11 or more percentage points.

"-" Indicates group average minus 5-10 percentage points.

"--" Indicates group average minus 11 or more percentage points.

(Only statistically significant changes ($p \leq .05$) are indicated.)

TABLE IV-19

NEGOTIABILITY: INDICATORS OF HIGH AND LOW PAY-OFF FOR ASSOCIATE AND BACHELORS GRADUATES

(Average %)	Increase in Job Responsibility		Pay Increase or Promotion		Changing Jobs	
	Associates	Bachelors	Associates	Bachelors	Associates	Bachelors
	(37)	(51)	(37)	(46)	(26)	(38)
SEX						
Men						
Women			++		+	
AGE AT EDP COMPLETION						
Less than 30		+				
30 - 39		+				
40 - 44						
45 - 49						
50 or over						--
AREA OF STUDY						
Business/Public Administration						
Applied Social Sciences						
General/Liberal Studies						
All other areas		-				
TYPE OF EMPLOYING ORGANIZATION						
Private Manufacturing						
Education						
Nonprofit Service						
Medical/Legal/Financial		--		--		
Armed Forces						
Self Employed						
Government						
Other Manufacturing						
TYPE OF JOB						
Prof'l/Subprof'l/Technical		+				+
Clerical, Sales, Lower Management		+			++	+
Services						
Armed Forces				--		
Other						
ASSESSMENT OF EMPLOYER SUPPORT	+	+	+	+	+	

KEY:

"+" Indicates group average plus 5 to 10 percentage points.

"++" Indicates group average plus 11 or more percentage points.

"-" Indicates group average minus 5 to 10 percentage points.

"--" Indicates group average minus 11 or more percentage points.

(Only statistically significant changes ($p \leq .05$) are indicated.)

CHAPTER V

ACCEPTABILITY: EDUCATION AFTER THE EXTERNAL DEGREE

The "acceptability" of the external degree was the second of the two issues central to this study. Although we could have operationalized acceptability in various ways, we recognized the growing concerns regarding the marketability of external degrees in the world of "traditional" education. We therefore decided to focus our treatment of acceptability on graduates' success in gaining access to further college degree programs.

As it seemed both prudent and useful to establish a setting against which to interpret better the analysis of acceptability, we examined certain basic education-related characteristics of these graduates. We began our look at graduates' post-EDP education experiences through crosstabulations of a few fundamental variables, a discussion of which follows below.

In Retrospect: Expected and Completed Further Education

At the time of survey, over half (56%) of all respondents had earned the bachelors degree, and nearly two-thirds (63%) expected to continue and complete a graduate degree at some time in the future (Table V-1). These figures corroborate the previously noted orientation towards continuing education (Chapter II). It is especially noteworthy that both Associate and Bachelors recipients had continued their education in considerable numbers, and also expected to do further academic work in future years. At the time of the survey, 41 percent of Associate graduates had already completed a Bachelors or higher level degree. Of the Bachelors EDP graduates, 29 percent had gone on to graduate study--a striking proportion. One might summarize these data by noting that almost none of the EDP graduates expected to end their formal education with that particular external degree, and that many had already gone a considerable distance towards more ambitious academic goals.

TABLE V-1

HIGHEST ACADEMIC DEGREE COMPLETED AS OF TIME OF SURVEY
AND EXPECTED TO COMPLETE DURING LIFETIME
BY LEVEL OF (EDP) DEGREE
(Percentage Responding)

Highest Degree	Level of (EDP) Degree					
	Associate		Bachelor		All	
	Completed	Expected	Completed	Expected	Completed	Expected
Associate	59	1	-	-	26	-
Bachelor	36	29	71	6	56	16
Master's	4	41	27	44	17	43
Doctorate (Ph.D or Professional)	1	15	2	24	1	20
(Have not decided)	-	15	-	25	-	21
Total %	100	101[a]	100	99[a]	100	100
(N)	(577)	(547)	(742)	(682)	(1,319)	(1,229)
(B)	(589)		(897)		(1,486)	

[a]Does not total to 100 % due to rounding.

Table V-2 shows that overall, 57 percent of the respondents had taken at least the first step towards continuing their formal education beyond their external degree by applying for admission to another degree program.[1, 2] Of these 840 applying graduates, 93 percent were admitted to at least one of the programs to which they applied, 88 percent enrolled, and about 63 percent completed at least one further degree. Admissions figures varied only slightly between Associates and Bachelors. Especially for the latter group--most of whom had continued into graduate-level programs--the high application, enrollment, and completion rates are noteworthy.[3] The figures in Table V-2 show that about 45 percent of all bachelor's degree recipients had enrolled in a graduate program and that about one third (32%) had obtained a degree.

While it is not possible to make exact and direct comparisons between these data and available national statistics, certain comparisons are of interest. A recent survey of "traditional" college graduates (class of '74-'75), mounted in Spring of 1976, showed that overall, a considerably lower proportion (27%) were enrolled in graduate study after completing their undergraduate degree. Proportions of men, women, graduates under 30, and graduates over 30 enrolled varied from the overall 27 percent figure only by two percentage points at the most.[4] Consistent with this proportion of traditional graduates enrolled were the two following findings from other research efforts: first, that "almost one-third (33%) of [college] students initially enrolled in 1968 planned to obtain a master's degree by 1976,"[5] and second, of the entering class of 1969, five years later over one-fifth (22%) were enrolled in graduate or professional school.[6]

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[1]A very few graduates (7% of the Associate and 11% of the Bachelors) applied for admission to a degree program not at the immediate next level; in most cases, it was the next (second) higher level.

[2]It should be noted here that graduates in this survey were not one cohort, but rather as a group had completed their degrees between 1968 and 1975.

[3]It might reasonably be questioned how much of this "success" of continuing into further degree programs was due to re-admission to a higher level program at the same institution. This and related matters will be discussed below.

[4]For further information, contact either Westat, Inc. of Rockville, Maryland, or the National Center for Education Statistics (DHEW): Office of Education), Washington, D.C. 20202.

[5]J.T. Royer and J.A. Creager, A Profile of 1968 College Freshmen In 1972 (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1976), Introduction.

[6]Alexander Astin, Four Critical Years (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1977), p. 113.

TABLE V-2

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO A FIRST SUBSEQUENT DEGREE PROGRAM AND OUTCOME OF APPLICATION BY LEVEL OF (EDP) DEGREE
(Percentage Responding)

	Level of (EDP) Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Applied[a]			
Yes	62	54	57
No	38	46	43
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(583)	(884)	(1,467)
(B)	(589)	(897)	(1,486)
Outcome of Application			
Pending[b]	3	5	4
Not admitted[c]	1	4	3
Admitted, did not enroll[d]	4	6	5
Enrolled, not yet completed[e,f]	24	26	25
Enrolled, completed[e,f]	68	59	63
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(341)	(451)	(792)
(B)	(361)	(479)	(840)

[a]Applied to one or more program(s).

[b]All application(s) pending.

[c]All application(s) refused.

[d]Admitted to at least one program but did not enroll.

[e]Enrolled in at least one program.

[f]Completion rates estimated due to missing data on completion date.

Equally impressive is the proportion of the EDP graduates who completed one post-EDP degree and continued to work for an additional one. As shown in Table V-3, one-quarter (N=188) applied for admission after completing a first program,[7] and of these applicants, 97 percent were admitted, 87 percent enrolled, and about 30 percent had completed their second post-EDP degree by the time of the survey.

Further Studies: Why or Why Not?

That over half the adults who obtained an external degree continued to pursue formal education programs signalled that this degree indeed was operating in some fashion--intentionally or unintentionally--as a "stepping stone" or an impetus and also did not constitute an obstacle to obtaining further education. At least for the graduates whose interests led them to seek a more advanced degree, the overall evaluation of their external degree experience with respect to academic skills was positive: only one percent reported feeling that their performance in their next degree program was not on a par with that of students who had come from traditional programs, and over half (57%) felt it was better (Table V-4). Even with respect to specific areas of preparation, such as subject content or study skills, fewer than 10 percent of the EDP graduates saw themselves as less well prepared than their peers from traditional programs (7% and 9%, respectively), and close to half (44% and 48%) reported feeling better prepared.

We feel reasonably certain that these figures go a long way towards supporting the inference that the great majority of graduates from these external degree programs--regardless of their interest in further study--found their studies and preparation to have been worthwhile. This conclusion is also borne out by the reasons given by those external degree holders who chose not to go on for further study. Inadequacy of the external degree, or apprehension about its acceptability, were very seldom mentioned. Instead, the most frequently mentioned reason by the 627 non-appliers for not continuing was lack of time both to work and to go to school, and this was fairly consistent for both Associate and Bachelors graduates (Table V-5). Also mentioned consistently by about a quarter of the graduates was their assessment that they did not need or really want a further degree at that time. Financial problems were noted by 23 percent of the Associate graduates (only by 10% of the Bachelors), and being tired of being a student was checked by 10 percent of the Bachelors graduates (5% of the Associates).

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[7]The bulk (60%) of these second-post-EDP-degree applicants were applying at this stage to Master's level programs, although they had already completed one of that same level since their Bachelor's EDP degree. Twenty percent were applying to a Bachelor's program, and the final 20 percent to a doctoral program.

TABLE V-3

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO A SECOND SUBSEQUENT DEGREE PROGRAM AND OUTCOME OF APPLICATION BY LEVEL OF (EDP) DEGREE
(Percentage Responding)

	Level of (EDP) Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Applied			
Yes	32	20	25
No	68	80	75
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(329)	(414)	(743)
(B)	(361)	(479)	(840)
Outcome of Application			
Not admitted	2	3	3
Admitted but did not enroll	8	13	10
Admitted, enrolled, did not (yet) complete	68	45	57
Admitted, enrolled, completed	22	39	30
Total %	100	100	100
(N)	(99)	(83)	(182)
(B)	(104)	(84)	(188)

TABLE V-4

(EDP) GRADUATES' ASSESSMENT OF THEIR PREPARATION AND PERFORMANCE IN COMPARISON WITH TRADITIONAL GRADUATES
(Percentage Responding)

Assessment	Comparison		
	In Subject Content Preparation	In Study Skills Preparation	In General Performance
Same	49	43	42
Better	44	48	57
Not as well	7	9	1
Total % (N)	100 (713)[a]	100 (688)[a]	100 (715)[a]

[a]Base Range: 697-739

TABLE V-5

REASONS FOR NOT APPLYING FOR FURTHER STUDY
BY LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage of Base Responding)

	Level of Degree		
	Associate	Bachelor	All
Didn't have time both to work and to go on for more schooling	35	30	31
Decided I didn't need or really want a further degree for now	22	23	23
Needed time to care for home and family	21	17	18
There have been no adequate programs where I have lived	18	12	14
Financial problems	23	10	14
Tired of being a student	5	10	8
Received a job offer which was too good to turn down	6	4	5
Didn't think my "external" degree would be acceptable for admission into a bachelor's, master's, or higher level degree program	3	2	2
Academic qualifications ("grades", standardized entrance test scores, etc.) weren't high enough, and I thought I wouldn't be admitted	1	1	1
Other	16	10	12
(Base)	(222)	(405)	(627)

The goals of graduates who entered a higher level degree program were compared with all respondents' goals at entering the (original) external degree program (see Chapter III). There was a notable increase in the importance of goals relating to professional growth (Table V-6). Personal satisfaction remained important (items # 1 and 5), but a considerable change was registered with respect to the items "to qualify for a professional license" and "to develop a new career" and items dealing with job skills and credentials (items # 4 and 7). The goal on which the most change registered was one generally characteristic of developing professional interests among more advanced students: "to learn more about the subject area simply because I was interested in it" (item # 6). Another indication that those who went on to more advanced study were motivated by professional growth goals was the decrease in importance of the item tapping rather narrow career-related concerns: "to obtain the credential which would make me eligible to receive the right pay for the work I already was (am) doing."

Applications for Further Study:
Problems Encountered

Usually, EDP graduates applied for admission to only one institution and to one program in that institution (79%), and little difference appeared in this regard between Associates and Bachelors. Another 15 percent applied to two, and the remaining 6 percent applied to three or more. As mentioned above, most of these graduates applied to the next "logical" level of degree. Area of study pursued while in the EDP made a difference in application rates in only one case: graduates who had been studying in behavioral or social sciences were more likely than average to apply (overall, 65%, as compared to 58%--data not shown). Sex of the graduate was in some respects a factor in applications: overall, slightly fewer women applied than men (53% compared with 58%). Women who had obtained an external Bachelors degree were less likely than their male counterparts to apply to Master's programs (46% compared to 54%).

Younger graduates (those in their 20's) more often applied to two or more institutions than did applicants overall (22% versus 15%).

The rate of application for admission to a degree program in the same institution as awarded the external degree was high: overall, about one-third (34%) applied to the same institution. Of those who made only one application, 39 percent were seeking to continue their education in the same institution; among those making more than one application, the percentage was lower (16%).[8]

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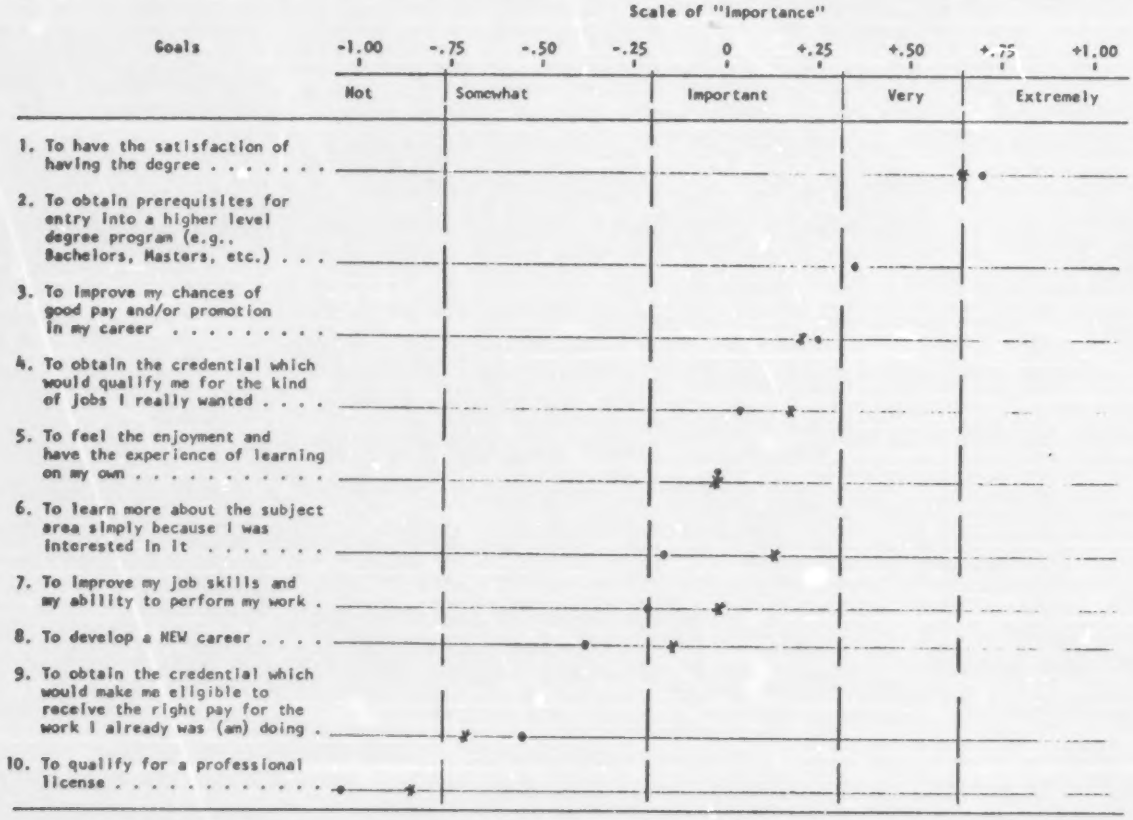
[8] It should be noted that many traditional students also obtain more than one degree from the same institution; this is especially true of students enrolled in large public systems. This phenomenon therefore does not imply that the student remained with the same institution because the external degree was not accepted elsewhere.

TABLE V-6

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS' GOALS AT ENTERING EXTERNAL DEGREE PROGRAM WITH GOALS AT ENTERING NEXT (MORE ADVANCED) DEGREE PROGRAM[a]


Scale of "Importance"
Goals
-1.00
-.75
-.50
-.25
0
+.25
+.50
+.75
+1.00
Not
Somewhat
Important
Very
Extremely
1. To have the satisfaction of having the degree . . . . . .
2. To obtain prerequisites for entry into a higher level degree program (e.g., Bachelors, Masters, etc.) . . .
3. To improve my chances of good pay and/or promotion in my career . . . . . .
4. To obtain the credential which would qualify me for the kind of jobs I really wanted . . . .
5. To feel the enjoyment and have the experience of learning on my own . . . . . .
6. To learn more about the subject area simply because I was interested in it . . . . . .
7. To improve my job skills and my ability to perform my work .
8. To develop a NEW career . . . .
9. To obtain the credential which would make me eligible to receive the right pay for the work I already was (am) doing .
10. To qualify for a professional license . . . . . .

KEY: ● = EDP Goal
★ = "Graduate" Goal

[a]The number of graduates applying to a further degree program was 840. N responding to the items in this table ranged from 723-771. The importance category boundaries are:

Not/Somewhat	-.77
Somewhat/Important	-.20
Important/Very	.32
Very/Extremely	.65

The actual item scale values shown above are:

Item #	Item Scale Value		Item #	Item Scale Value	
	EDP Goal	"Graduate" Goal		EDP Goal	"Graduate" Goal
1	.70	.65	6	-.16	.14
2	.35	(Did not ask)	7	-.20	.00
3	.25	.21	8	-.36	-.11
4	.04	.30	9	-.56	-.73
5	-.03	-.03	10	-1.10	-.84

Standard error for all items <.04.

Among these applicants the most popular area for further study was business or public administration. Over a third (38%) of the applications made were to programs of this nature. Second and third most popular were applied social sciences or human services programs, and behavioral social sciences programs (with 24% and 14% of the applications made).

Another dimension of interest regarding these graduates' applications for further degree programs was the "selectivity" (the relative difficulty of gaining admission) of the institutions to which applications were made.[9] We had found little data from earlier research dealing with external degree graduates' institutional preferences or selections they made for obtaining additional formal education, but saw that in general, applicants in our study chose mid-range schools (Table V-7). With possible ratings ranging from a low 1 to a high of 7, EDP graduates on the average applied to schools rated as "4" (mean rating = 4.2; median = 4). Applicants from Associate programs applied to schools with somewhat lower ratings than did applicants from Bachelors programs (mean of 3.9 as opposed to mean of 4.4, although medians at 4 were equal). One of the applicants' strategies for assuring admission, therefore, may have been applying to a lower-rated institution when they applied to one school only, or to put that school first when they applied to more than one. Extra applications apparently were sent to institutions with slightly higher ratings; these may have been low-risk attempts to gain access to better programs. Another explanation for the selectivity choices of these applicants may simply be that lack of geographic mobility, financial resources, or any number of other restrictions may have come into play.

When queried whether they felt they had experienced any special problems during the applications process, 11 percent of the continuing EDP graduates responded "yes." The 11 percent were typically Bachelors recipients (14% of the Bachelors recipients felt they had had problems, but only 7% of the Associates), and were also more likely to have been women (19% of applying women felt they had experienced problems, but only 8% of the men).

Those who had encountered problems were asked to detail the special demands made by the institutions to which they had applied. Most frequently mentioned were requests for additional letters of reference from advisors of faculty, having to agree to probationary admission, or completing a personal interview in instances where such interviews were not required of other applicants. Bachelors applicants mentioned having to score higher on standardized tests such as the Graduate Record Exam or having to take standardized exams not required of other applicants to gain admission.

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[9]Source of information regarding selectivity and the ratings of individual institutions was Alexander Astin, Predicting Academic Performance in College (New York: Free Press, 1971).

It might be noted here that the lower average rating of institutions to which Associate graduates applied might be in part due to the fact that four-year college--most likely the type of institutions to which graduates at this level would apply--on the average probably had slightly lower ratings than did universities, to which Bachelors graduates would be applying.

TABLE V-7

SELECTIVITY RATINGS[b] OF INSTITUTIONS APPLIED TO BY LEVEL OF (EDP) DEGREE
(Unit of Analysis = Selectivity rating of institution to which each application was made)[a]

Selectivity Rating		Level of (EDP) Degree					
		Associate		Bachelor		All	
		% 1st or only Application	% 2nd or 3rd Application	% 1st or only Application	% 2nd or 3rd Application	% 1st or only Application	% 2nd or 3rd Application
Low	1.	3	11	1	2	2	4
	2.	3	11	4	3	4	5
	3.	34	11	30	16	31	15
	4.	25	29	20	27	22	28
	5.	28	26	27	26	27	26
	6.	4	8	9	12	7	11
High	7.	3	3	9	14	7	11
	Total %	100	100	100	100	100	100
	Total Known Ratings	(167)	(35)	(256)	(110)	(423)	(145)

	Known Associate Applications	Known Bachelor Applications	Known 1st/only Applications	Known 2nd/3rd Applications	All Known Applications
Mean Rating. . . .	3.9	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.2
Median Rating. . .	4	4	3	4	4

[a]A total of 453 applications were made for which no selectivity rating was available. The 453 were distributed as follows:

Associate		Bachelor		All	
1st	2nd,3rd	1st	2nd,3rd	1st	2nd,3rd
175	38	198	42	373	80

[b]Source of Selectivity Ratings: Astin, Alexander. Predicting Academic Performance in College. Free Press, 1971.

Those graduates who experienced difficulties in gaining admission to graduate programs most often cited as reasons the two characteristics of external degree programs which are most likely to be questioned in an academic context: lack of regional accreditation[10] and use of nontraditional transcripts. Not having a formal grade-point-average as an item on their transcript was identified as a problem by 30 percent, but it was notably more often checked by the applicant as the reason felt to be the crucial one, rather than the "official" reason given by the institution (Table V-8). Lack of regional accreditation was cited most frequently as an official reason for nonadmission (18% of those who had problems checked it as the reason given by the institution as the cause of nonadmission). According to the applicants who had problems, the other two reasons for nonadmission most frequently given by institutions were the inability to accept credits which had been awarded for work or life experience, and the presence of too many qualified applicants in general. On the other hand, the reasons most often cited by the applicants were that the form of their transcript--probably narrative to some degree--had been difficult for the admissions office to interpret, or that the admissions office had not taken the time to read the transcript.[11]

Very few applicants who had admissions problems indicated that they felt their age, sex, race or ethnicity were the cause.

Acceptability in Stages: From Application to Enrollment

The acceptability of the external degree, in effect the extent to which it served as a satisfactory credential towards gaining access to a higher-level college degree program, was a central concern of this research. As the data in this chapter have shown, in fact, sizable proportions of external degree holders applied for further study. The majority were admitted to the institution of their choice, and almost all those who were accepted actually enrolled. In the remainder of this discussion, we will subject the data to more intensive analysis in order to examine the process of external degree graduates' passage to further degreed education: who wanted to continue? what factors contributed to gaining admission? to enrollment in the program?

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[10]Of the 20 institutions whose graduates participated in this study, 17 had regional accreditation as of September 1976. Since that time, however, 2 of the remaining three have obtained formal regional accreditation (the third is a formal candidate). For further discussion of the accreditation status of all external degree programs which we identified in Phase I of this study, and of the proportions of credit they granted for prior learning acquired in non-academic settings, see Sosdian and Sharp, Guide to Undergraduate External Degree Programs in The United States.

[11]These findings are consistent with those discussed by H.K. Zanville "Implications for Nontraditional Education: Graduate and Professional School Receptivity to Nontraditional Student Applicants." (Dissertation, University of Minnesota), August, 1976.

TABLE V-8

REASONS FOR APPLICATION PROBLEMS
(Percentage of Base Responding)[a]

Reasons	Checked by Applicant as Official Reason Cited by Institution	Checked by Applicant as Personally Felt To Be a Reason	All[b] (Official or Personal)
My TRANSCRIPT did NOT contain a GRADE POINT AVERAGE for information easily convertible to something like a grade point average	11	19	30
The institution (or the program) from which I obtained my "nontraditional" degree did NOT have full ACCREDITATION	18	4	22
The FORM or the WORDING of the TRANSCRIPT made it impossible for the admissions office to JUDGE the amount or type of work I had done	4	17	21
The admissions office could not accept "credit" for WORK or LIFE EXPERIENCE as assessed by my degree program and reported on my TRANSCRIPT	11	7	18
The admissions office staff did NOT take the TIME to read my TRANSCRIPT	1	15	16
TOO MANY qualified APPLICANTS for the program . .	12	2	14
There was a DELAY in issuing my TRANSCRIPT to the admissions office	8	6	14
My STANDARDIZED entrance TEST SCORES (e.g., SAT's, GRE's, etc.) were not high enough	4	4	8
My GRADES (or other evaluations) were not high enough	3	4	7
My AGE	2	2	4
My SEX	1	1	2
I did not have enough good LETTERS of recommendation	2	-	2
My RACE	-	1	1
Other problem	6	10	16
No reason given or known	4	2	6
(Base)	(88)	(88)	(88)

[a]Base = Applicants reporting having had application problems.

[b]There were no respondents who attributed both institutional and personal accounting to any of the reasons listed.

To probe for answers to these questions, we treated acceptability in stages: first, the initial decision of the graduate to apply; second, the institution's response as defined by admitting or not admitting the student; and third, the graduate's decision to enroll in the program.[12]

For the first stage, we examined the factors involved in deciding to apply, first for all respondents collectively and then for four subgroups, men, women, Associate EDP graduates, and Bachelor EDP graduates, since we anticipated different findings for these subgroups. Although it would have been useful to stay with this collective versus subgroup approach for the remainder of the acceptability analysis, this was not possible because of the nature of the data set (too few respondents were refused admission or failed to enroll). Stages II and III of the acceptability analysis (admission and enrollment) were examined only across all respondents collectively.

Stage I: The Decision to Apply.[13]--Overall, over half (53%) of the respondents applied to at least one institution to continue their formal education (Table V-9, Model I). Both demographic and attitudinal factors seemed to be operating in this decision-making process. Overall, women were less likely than men to apply (44% of women graduates as opposed to 55% of men graduates applied; Table V-9, Models II and III). This was consistent regardless of the level of external degree the graduate had earned. Associate holders across the board were slightly more likely than Bachelors holders to apply (57% as compared with 51%; Models IV and V).

Although the relationship did not quite reach statistical significance, it appeared that graduates (at both degree levels) of free standing EDP programs may have been slightly more likely than affiliated institution EDP graduates to apply for further study.

Age looked as though it were an important variable, both across all graduates and within subgroups, although it reached statistical significance with only one subgroup--women. Graduates who had completed their external degree in their early forties seemed most likely (about 5% higher than average) to decide to continue their formal education, and after that time (45 or over), somewhat less likely (about 4% lower than average). However, this overall finding obscures important differences by sex. A woman graduate between the ages of 30 and 39 was 16 percentage points more likely than the average woman to continue, and beyond 39, still more likely than average, but not to so great an extent.

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[12]Earlier analysis has shown that elapsed time was the major factor differentiating between enrolled graduates who had completed their next program and those who had not. We therefore omitted this last stage from further analysis.

[13]Some cases were lost from the five models constituting Stage I of the acceptability analysis because of nonresponse to certain questions essential to the multiple regression calculations.

TABLE V-9

REGRESSION ESTIMATES OF INFLUENCES ON ACCEPTABILITY (STAGE I)[a] FOR FIVE ANALYSIS GROUPS

Model		I All Graduates: Applied?		II Women Graduates: Applied?		III Men Graduates: Applied?		IV Associate Graduates: Applied?		V Bachelor Graduates: Applied?	
	R	.389		.517		.370		.351		.448	
	(Base N):	(1112)		(254)		(832)		(540)		(669)	
	Mean (%) Applied:	.53		.44		.55		.57		.51	
	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.	
SEX											
Men[d]	(858)	.01					(344)	.01	(511)	.01	
Women	(254)	-.04					(96)	-.03	(158)	-.03	
LEVEL OF DEGREE											
Associate	(440)	-.01	(96)	-.02	(330)	.00					
Bachelors[d]	(672)	.00	(158)	.01	(502)	.00					
TYPE OF EDP INSTITUTION											
Freestanding	(524)	.03[e]	(139)	.03	(372)	.04	(304)	.03[e]	(220)	.05	
Affiliated[d]	(588)	-.03	(115)	-.03	(460)	-.03	(136)	-.07	(449)	-.02	
AGE AT EDP COMPLETION											
Less than 30 years	(335)	-.02	(80)	-.12	(233)	-.01	(153)	.01	(179)	-.06	
30 - 39 years	(375)	.02	(63)	.16[e]	(310)	.01	(150)	.02	(225)	.02	
40 - 44 years	(144)	.05	(29)	.09	(115)	.04	(48)	.05	(96)	.06	
45 - 49 years[d]	(125)	-.03	(34)	-.06	(90)	-.03	(38)	-.03	(87)	-.02	
50 or over	(133)	-.03	(48)	-.02	(84)	-.03	(51)	-.13	(82)	.04	
NUMBER OF CHILDREN[c]		.01		.01		.02[e]		.00		.02[e]	
AREA OF STUDY											
Business/Public Administration	(334)	.06[e]	(35)	.00	(291)	.05[e]	(90)	.14[e]	(241)	.03	
Applied Social Sciences	(224)	-.02	(75)	.01	(145)	.00	(48)	-.09	(176)	-.02	
General/Liberal Studies	(196)	-.01	(38)	-.15[e]	(152)	.00	(138)	-.01	(58)	.00	
All other areas[d]	(361)	-.03	(106)	.05	(244)	-.06	(164)	-.04	(194)	-.02	
TYPE OF EMPLOYING ORGANIZATION											
Private manufacturing[d]	(96)	-.03	(11)	.09	(82)	-.04	(43)	-.04	(53)	-.04	
Education	(138)	.06	(84)	.03	(47)	.08	(50)	.04	(88)	.06	
Nonprofit service	(152)	.06	(38)	.10	(111)	.05	(54)	.03	(98)	.07	
Medical/Legal/Financial	(66)	-.03	(35)	-.08	(30)	-.05	(25)	.00	(41)	-.09	
Armed Forces	(262)	-.07	(18)	.01	(254)	-.05	(128)	-.05	(132)	-.04	
Self Employed	(31)	.06	(7)	.01	(24)	.06	(16)	.15	(15)	.00	
Government	(56)	.03	(4)	.22	(52)	.02	(24)	.02	(32)	.02	
Other Nonmanufacturing	(235)	-.01	(46)	-.10	(184)	.01	(90)	-.01	(144)	-.02	
Did not specify	(76)	.05	(26)	-.03	(48)	.09	(10)	.23	(66)	.01	
TYPE OF JOB											
Prof'l/Subprof'l/Technical	(493)	-.02	(164)	-.01	(316)	.00	(168)	.03	(324)	-.03	
Clerical, Sales, Lower management	(145)	-.03	(63)	-.03	(79)	-.03	(70)	-.03	(75)	-.01	
Services[b]	(101)	.00	(8)	.13	(90)	-.03	(34)	.05	(67)	.00	
Armed forces[d]	(315)	.03	(18)	.14	(291)	.01	(145)	-.05	(168)	.06	
Other	(58)	.07	(1)	-.08	(56)	.07	(23)	.15	(35)	.03	
GRADUATES' GOALS AT ENTERING EDP											
Desire for:[c]											
Job recognition/advancement		-.02[e]		.00		-.02[e]		-.03[e]		-.01[e]	
Job mobility		.00		.00		.00		.00		.00	
Improvement in job skills		-.02[e]		-.[illegible][e]		-.02		-.03[e]		-.02[e]	
Enjoyment of learning		.01[e]		.01		.02[e]		.01		.01[e]	
Satisfaction of having degree		-.04[e]		-.04		-.04[e]		-.02		-.05[e]	
EDP as prerequisite		.12[e]		.12[e]		.11[e]		.09[e]		.14[e]	
GRADUATES' NEGOTIABILITY SCORE		.00		.00		.00		.01		.01	
GRADUATES' ASSESSMENT OF OWN IMPROVEMENT IN ACADEMIC STUDY SKILLS[c]		.00		.00		.01		.00		.01	
GRADUATES' ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM EMPLOYER[c]		.04[e]		.03		.04		.06[e]		.01	

[a] "Acceptability" measured at this stage of analysis as whether or not EDP graduate applied for further degree study.

[b] Includes security and protective services; non-professional health services.

[c] Continuous variable; questions were eligible to be answered by all respondents.

[d] Significance not ascertainable for these categories.

[e] Approached significance at $p \leq .05$

[f] $p \leq .05$

If she were younger than 30, she was probably less likely to continue. Age did not appear to have strong effects for men, however. Among our graduates, the early forties were the period during which men were most likely to apply for admission (about 4% more likely than the average for men); after 45, they appeared less likely to apply (around 4%, the same percentage as for women). Degree level accounted for very little difference in this pattern; applications increased until around age 45, then decreased for Associates and Bachelors alike.

Overall the number of children had little impact upon the decision to apply for further education, but for two subgroups--men and Bachelor's graduates--this factor seemed to be somewhat relevant.

Graduates whose field of study was in business or public administration were most likely of all to continue (about 6 percentage points above average). In looking at subgroups, it appeared that men in this area were more likely than women to apply, but degree level showed the stronger relationship: Associate degree holders in this area were about 14 percentage points more likely to apply to the next level of program than Associate graduates overall, but Bachelors recipients in this area were only about 3 percentage points more likely than their group average to do so.

The picture for General or Liberal Studies appeared quite "average" across all graduates, but when applications were examined for men versus women, it became clear that women graduates from this area were considerably less likely to continue their education (about 15 percentage points less likely than the average for women--29% applied compared with 44% for all women). For men in this area, the application rate appeared about average. Also with regard to this study area, little effect emerged with regard to degree level: Associate holders seemed about as likely as Bachelors to want to continue, and both were about average.

Because these graduates--the great majority of whom had been employed for a number of years--had been to some extent motivated by job and career-related concerns when they first undertook their study program, we sought to probe this area in relation to subsequent decisions to continue studies. While none of the employment-related factors showed statistically significant relationship with applications made, some interesting trends did emerge which might be examined in future studies. There were indications that graduates who worked in private manufacturing companies or in medical/legal/financial firms may have been less likely to decide to apply for further education, whereas those who were employed in social service sites (education, counseling, protective services, and so on) were more likely to do so. Sex appeared to be a factor: women in manufacturing and in nonprofit services organizations seemed more likely than average for their sex to apply, but appeared less likely to apply if they were employed in a medical, legal, or financial organization. Men in education and nonprofit service organizations seemed to apply more frequently.

The type of job held while in the external degree program also appeared to have little to do with application rates, and this did not change when the data were examined for each subgroup.

Summing the trends discussed so far, which deal chiefly with the relationships between these demographic and social factors and a graduate's decision to apply to higher degree program:

- men more frequently than women applied;
- Associate graduates more frequently than Bachelors applied;
- the "prime" age period to show an interest in further education seemed to be about 30-44, but this differed by sex;
- Business or public administration graduates, especially if they were men or if they had earned an Associate degree, were likely to seek to continue;
- graduates employed in private manufacturing concerns or in the armed forces overall seemed least likely to seek to continue, but this differed by sex;
- there was no dependable relationship between type of job held and the decision to continue formal education.

Finally, we examined the relationship between the decision to continue and the graduates' goals when they entered their external degree program. Surprisingly, those who held fairly narrow career-goals at the time of entry were less likely to seek to continue. The external degree may have been operating as a short-run career "booster" for those who sought to improve their formal credentials but who evidently did not find credentials beyond their EDP degree either necessary or desirable. This was true for both men and women, and for Associate and Bachelors graduates as well.

Similarly, graduates who had reported pursuing their external degree for the satisfaction of having the degree were significantly less likely than average to continue their formal education. This was also true for each of the respective subgroups. The only strong correlate of applying to the next degree program was the specific intention (goal) of earning the external degree in order to qualify to continue one's formal education. (It will be recalled that 58% of EDP graduates chose this item as one their very important initial goals).

The observed relationships are complex, defying simplistic interpretations. Although job-related concerns were not predictive of the decision to undertake post-EDP studies, they were very much in the picture at the time the first decision to go on for further education was made. Those respondents who felt that their employer had been

supportive of their external degree program were more likely to opt in favor of further academic work; this was especially true of Associate degree holders. In combination, these findings suggest that many external degree holders initially enroll with a well-defined long-term education plan which they are likely to implement, especially if they receive support and encouragement from their employer.

Stage II: Admission to a Program.[14]--It is important to note at this point the high overall admission rate for these external degree graduates: 89 percent of those who applied were admitted. Where relationships emerged concerning admission rates for graduates, it should be kept in mind that deviations (percentage plus for minus) were from that 89 percent, and affected only a small proportion of applicants (Table V-10, Stage II).

Associates applicants were on the average about 5 percentage points more likely than average for all applicants to gain admission, and Bachelors about 4 percentage points less likely. Area of study in the external degree program seemed to be related to admission: graduates who had pursued Applied Social Sciences or General or Liberal studies degrees were noticeably more likely to be admitted than average, and (except for Business and Public Administration graduates) graduates from other areas seemed less likely to be able to continue into the program of their choice. The type of institution from which the graduate had earned the external degree may have been of some importance in this admissions process. Applicants who had come from freestanding institutions comparatively speaking were at a disadvantage by about 3 percentage points; those who had come from affiliated institutions were about 3 percentage points more likely than average to be admitted.[15]

One factor which appeared to increase or lower the admission rate slightly was whether or not the graduate applied for re-admission to the same institution (but into another program at that institution). When this was the case, the graduate's chances of admission rose about 3 percentage points, and if not, they dropped. These effects seem minimal compared with the wide variations which might have been expected but again, it should be remembered that these relationships did not reach statistical significance.

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[14]Some cases were lost from the Stage II model of the acceptability analysis because of nonresponse to certain questions essential to the multiple regression calculations. This Stage II model examined the outcome of applications made by persons submitting only one, combined with the outcomes of the first application made by persons who submitted more than one.

[15]These regression estimates did not reach statistical significance and therefore must be interpreted with caution. See Chapter I for definition of free-standing and affiliated institutions.

TABLE V-10

REGRESSION ESTIMATES ON ACCEPTABILITY (STAGES II AND III)[a]

Model	Stage II: Admitted?		Stage III: Enrolled?	
	R	.460	R	.326
	(Base N)	(535)	(Base N)	(474)
	Mean (%) Admitted:	.89	Mean (%) Enrolled:	.92
	(N)	Regr. Est.	(N)	Regr. Est.
SEX				
Men[b]	(433)	.00	(392)	-.01
Women	(102)	-.02	(82)	.04
LEVEL OF DEGREE				
Associate	(220)	.05*	(269)	.04*
Bachelor[b]	(315)	-.04	(205)	-.03
AREA OF STUDY				
Business/Public Administration	(169)	-.01	(156)	.01
Applied Social Sciences	(102)	.04*	(77)	.05*
General/Liberal Studies	(89)	.06*	(84)	-.01
All other areas[b]	(175)	-.04	(157)	-.04
TYPE OF EDP INSTITUTION				
Freestanding	(248)	-.03[d]	(207)	.01
Affiliated	(287)	.03	(267)	-.01
APPLIED TO SAME INSTITUTION AS AWARDED EXT. DEGREE				
Yes	(196)	.03	(192)	.03
No[b]	(339)	-.02	(282)	-.02
SELECTIVITY OF INSTITUTION				
Low	(14)	.03	(12)	.05
Low/Medium	(93)	.04	(86)	.02
Medium[b]	(65)	-.01	(56)	-.01
Medium/High	(80)	-.12*	(60)	-.07
High	(34)	-.08	(24)	-.07
Not Rated	(249)	.04	(236)	.02
NUMBER OF INSTITUTIONS APPLIED TO				
One	(427)	.03*	(397)	.02*
Two	(80)	-.10*	(61)	-.07
Three or More[b]	(28)	-.25	(16)	-.13
AGE AT EDP COMPLETION				
Less than 30	(155)	-.01	(133)	-.02
30 - 39	(193)	-.00	(173)	-.01
40 - 44	(79)	-.03	(69)	.02
45 - 49[b]	(54)	.04	(49)	.03
50 and over	(54)	.04	(50)	.04
GRADUATE'S GOALS AT ENTERING EDP:				
Desire for:[c]				
Job recognition/advancement		-.01[d]		-.01[d]
Job mobility		.00		.01*
Improvement in job skills		.00		.01[d]
Enjoyment of learning		-.01[d]		-.01
Satisfaction of having degree		-.01		.01
EDP as prerequisite		-.01		-.01
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF IMPROVEMENT IN ACADEMIC STUDY SKILLS[c]		.01*		.01
GRADUATE'S ASSESSMENT OF SUPPORT RECEIVED FROM EMPLOYER[c]		.01		.00

[a]Acceptability (Stage II) is defined as whether or not those applied to further degree study were admitted.

Acceptability (Stage III) is defined as whether or not those who were admitted to further degree study enrolled.

[b]Significance not ascertainable for these categories.

[c]Continuous variable; questions were eligible to be answered by all respondents.

[d]Approached significance at $p \leq .05$.

*$p \leq .05$.

The factor which did seem to explain admission better than other factors included in the survey was the selectivity of the institution to which the application had been made. The trend emerged for admission to be slightly more likely (three to four percentage points) if the institution was rated low or low/medium, to taper off towards average at ratings of medium, and to decrease sharply if the institution was rated medium/high or high. For institutions which had not yet been rated at the time the ratings source was developed (1971), the admission rate was similar to institutions at the low/medium portion of the scale.

The number of institutions to which the graduate applied was also related to admission. It appeared that graduates who had applied to only one institution were slightly more likely than average to gain admission. (Inspection of the applications made by the few graduates who made multiple applications showed that on the average, they applied to institutions with slightly higher ratings).

Stage III: Enrollment.[16]--Of the graduates who gained admission to the next degree program, nearly everyone--92 percent--enrolled (Table V-10, Stage III).

Only a few variables seemed to have any meaningful relationship with enrollment rates. Women appeared to be slightly more likely than men to enroll (it will be remembered that women were slightly less likely to gain admission). Level of degree appeared to operate in an opposite fashion: Associates graduates had been comparatively more likely than Bachelors to be admitted, and they were also comparatively more likely to enroll, once admitted.

The picture in enrollments with regard to area of study was similar to the way it was in Stage II, with the exception of graduates from one area, General or Liberal Studies. While applicants from that area had been more likely than average to gain admission to their next program, they apparently enrolled at the average rate.

Graduates who applied to their "alma mater" were slightly more likely to enroll than those who had been admitted elsewhere.

Again, tentatively speaking (none of these relationships reached statistical significance) graduates seemed to prefer to enroll in institutions with lower selectivity.

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[16]Some cases were lost from the Stage III model because of nonresponse to certain questions essential to the multiple regression calculations.

A set of rather curious findings from Stage III should be noted. In general, those who were accepted by more highly selective institutions seemed less likely than average to enroll. However, the same phenomenon seemed to occur for respondents who had made more than one application. Why enrollment was slightly less likely in these cases cannot be ascertained at this point. One might speculate that higher costs, lack of geographic mobility, difficulties encountered during the admissions process despite eventual acceptance, apprehension about program difficulties, or other factors may have played a part.

CHAPTER VI

THE EMPLOYER SURVEY

Background

While this study of the acceptability and negotiability of external degrees uses as its primary source of data the reports and perceptions of the graduates themselves, the study staff and the study sponsor agreed that coverage of these issues would be considerably enhanced if we could supplement the graduate study with two additional perspectives on acceptability and negotiability concerns, namely, those of college and university admissions officers and of likely employers of graduates. However, resource limitations dictated the necessity for compromise: only one supplementary study could be undertaken.

It became apparent that of the two topics, the employer study would be more useful and timely. A particularly pertinent inquiry into acceptability-related problems at the graduate admissions level had been completed in 1976; it was at least as comprehensive in scope as any study we could have undertaken at this time.[1] This, accompanied by the lack of literature addressing changes or improvements in the work-life of adults who complete a college degree at a later-than-average time in life, strongly suggested that we concentrate our efforts and available resources on the employer's perspective.

Several constraints limited our choices in possible designs for the supplementary study. First, the availability of only modest resources necessitated designing and mounting an efficient but small-scale survey. Second, however the target population of employers was to be defined, we would have to overcome the problem of differing levels of familiarity with the external degree concept (indeed, familiarity with external degrees would be difficult to establish or access). Third, while from the point of view of design, a graduate-by-graduate case study approach would have served our exploratory data needs, ethical considerations prohibited this path, given the need for adequate respondent privacy protection.

Given these boundaries, we agreed that it would be most suitable to direct our attention to general employer hiring and promotion policies and practices, and to investigate whether and how these policies/practices relate to external degree graduates as compared with traditional graduates, rather than try at this time to document the actual employment experiences of external degree holders. In effect,

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[1] See H.K. Zanville, Implications for Nontraditional Education: Graduate and Professional School Receptivity to Nontraditional Student Applications, dissertation for the Ph.D. (University of Minnesota), August, 1976.

we chose to conduct an opinion survey of employers, using an economical Q-sort design and a dimensional sampling approach which permitted us to deal with a small number of employers while allowing for the analysis of organizational characteristics which might affect recruitment and promotion practices and policies. We allocated our small sample of employers by sector (public vs. private), type of employer activity (education; health; criminal justice/law enforcement/security; and miscellaneous private functions such as banking or utilities), and organization size[2] (four categories).

A total of 93 employers were originally selected for the survey and were contacted. By the close of the survey, we had received completed returns from 81 (87%).[3]

Development and Administration of the Survey

Although the unit of analysis for this survey was the employing organization, it was obviously necessary to contact a spokesperson to represent each employer selected. To fill this role, we chose as respondent for each organization an upper-level personnel officer responsible for recruitment and promotions.

Respondents were asked to read and to rate 33 statements ("items") concerning general organizational hiring or promotion policies as to how well each statement reflected his or her own organization's policies (the level of agreement, referred to during the survey and the remainder of this report as "congruence," was to be rated on an eleven-point continuum).[4] The items (shown in Table VI-1) were designed to serve two purposes: first, to identify criteria most important overall in hiring and promotion decisionmaking; second, to investigate whether

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[2]The above is an abbreviated description of the procedure for dimensional sampling, as developed by David O. Arnold in "Dimensional Sampling: An Approach for Studying a Small Number of Cases," The American Sociologist, Vol. 5, May, 1970, 147-150. For further details regarding the methodology of the employer survey, see Volume Two of this report, Section C.

[3]The three dimensions chosen for sampling (sector, activity, and size) yielded a 2 x 4 x 4 selection matrix with 32 cells. We had originally planned to select 3 employers for each cell, yielding a total sample population of 96 employers. For three of the cells, we were not able to identify sufficient cases, leaving an original survey population of 93. Twenty-one of those originally selected declined to participate and were replaced as appropriate.

[4]The statements (items) were developed during the preparatory phase of this employer survey, during which we carried out several personal, unstructured interviews with employers representative of each of the major subgroupings.

the organization's treatment of job or promotion candidates who were external degree graduates would differ from treatment given to candidates who were traditional degree graduates.[5] We expected that the organizational variables used to delineate the dimensional sample (sector, type of employer activity, and organization size) would be found to affect both the rank order of hiring or promotion criteria and the attitude toward external degrees.

The Employer's Perspective

Criteria Important in Hiring and Promotions[6]

General Most Important Criteria[7].--Factors related to education were not at the top of the list when we examined responses to the 33 statements looking for criteria considered important in hiring and promotion decisionmaking. Two factors were clearly most important, individual personality-related characteristics of the candidate (such as his or her maturity, real interest in the job, manner, adaptability) and the candidate's relevant prior job experience (the three items which ranked as "most congruent" with recruitment and promotion policies stressed the importance of relevant experience and personality, items #9, 13, and 14: Table IV-1).

The Role of Education.--Education, whether defined in general terms or in the form of college study or degrees, emerged as an important element, but not as a key criterion for recruitment or promotion. Education was seen as highly desirable "ground level" preparation for work, but it was not thought of as sufficient to qualify a candidate either for job entry or for job promotion. The education-related item which ranked in the "moderately high congruence" range expressed a positive attitude towards value of having more education in general, but not towards the value of specific college degrees from specific institutions. Corroborative of the ratings given to this "general education" item, respondents also indicated that as a rule, they did not design pay scales

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[5]To establish at least a minimum familiarity with the external degree concept, the study's definition and description of external degrees, developed during Phase One of the study, was included in the instructions to the respondents.

[6]Again, data collected were "subjective" in the sense that they resulted from spokesperson's reports of organizational policies/practices and "attitudes" towards college graduates and education in general. They were not intended to be precise documentations of hiring and promotion operations and should not be treated as such.

[7]For technical information regarding the data analysis, see Volume Two, Section C of this report. Items which were determined during analysis to be "more congruent," relatively speaking, were interpreted as "more important," and vice versa.

TABLE VI-1 (page 1)

RELATIVE CONGRUENCE[a] OF EMPLOYER SURVEY ITEMS WITH EMPLOYER'S HIRING AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Very High Congruence	Moderately High Congruence
For young applicants with no experience, we tend to look at courses, grades or degree(s) obtained. For more mature persons with experience, it is primarily their work history which interests us. (#9)	Education makes a person more versatile, better able to accept challenges, and more willing to accept responsibility. For this reason we encourage our employees to get all the education they can. (#3)
One of the most important considerations in evaluating prospective employees is whether or not the applicant has the personality to deal with the public. Appearance and manner are important considerations in filling jobs involving public contact. (#13)	Our organization has a general policy of contributing to and/or paying tuition and fees for our employees to help them obtain further education, particularly if they take courses which are relevant to their work. (#20)
We look primarily for a mature approach combined with a real interest in the job. (#14)	We tend to give more weight to recommendations from former employers of prospective employees than to those from their former professor or placement officers. (#11)
	When matching a prospective employee to a job,we find that information gained from formal classroom instruction frequently has little relevance to what is expected on the job. Prospective employees who have been able to combine academic credentials with on-the-job training or work exnerience can probably best be placed in positions with most our needs. (#23)
	Applicants may substitute work experience for academic credentials to satisfy the minimum education standards outlined in the job description. (#12)
	We are more likely to consider good experience and excellent references in the selection of personnel than whether or not the applicant has attended college or taken college level courses. (#10)
	We usually fill administrative and supervisory vacancies from within the organization rather than bringing in new people from outside. (#31)

TABLE VI-1 (page 2)

RELATIVE CONGRUENCE[a] OF EMPLOYER SURVEY ITEMS WITH EMPLOYER'S HIRING AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Neutral/Slightly Positive Congruence

In reviewing an application, we consider college experience in general more important than the actual course work. A college graduate generally has a broader perspective and better judgement than someone without as much education. (#2)

The reputation of the program or the specific courses taken are more important to us in making an evaluation of an applicant than the reputation of the institution he/she attended. (#19)

The persons doing our hiring are very free to use their own judgment in selecting and rejecting among prospective employees. They are not bound by having to recruit candidates with specific educational or skill qualifications. (#16)

Academic requirements are extremely flexible in our organization. Our judgments in hiring professional, technical, or administrative personnel would be based primarily on other qualifications of the applicant. (#15)

With few exceptions, the completion of four years of college or university is a minimum requirement for positions in administration and management. (#15)

All professional and managerial positions have written job descriptions which specify the qualifications which a potential employee should have. We are only able to hire candidates who meet the minimum educational standards outlined in the job description. (#6)

An external degree granted by an accredited institution is accepted on the same basis as a traditional degree when evaluating a prospective applicant's educational background. (#17)

Neutral/Slightly Low Congruence

In evaluating applicants we find that knowledge in a specific field or evidence of specific ability, such as the ability to write well, is more important than formal education. Often we ask an applicant to submit samples of actual work or copies of reports he/she has written for our consideration. (#21)

We tend to hire college students for temporary jobs or internships with the intention of hiring many of them later on a regular basis. (#1)

We tend to hire graduates from colleges and universities whose reputations are strong. (#25)

In hiring decisions, we use college grades as indicators of a prospective employee's potential to handle a job. (#8)

In our organization we feel that obtaining an external degree would be more useful to an employee to qualify him/her for a promotion within the organization than it would be as a qualification for an initial hire. (#24)

If we had to choose between two candidates who had external degrees, we would probably hire a graduate from a school which offers both regular and external degree programs rather than one from a school offering external degrees only. (#27)

We are often not as interested in the educational qualifications <u>per se</u> of a prospective employee as in the fact that he/she must have licenses or certification to perform the work required. (#33)

Much of our hiring is circumscribed by specifications set forth by the government or unions. As a result, we do not feel that we always are free to hire the person we want most for the job. (#32)

Our organization has found that persons who have college degrees tend to expect more rapid job advancement and higher salaries than those who do not have the degree. We prefer to fill positions with candidates who have experience and skills rather than degrees. (#29)

TABLE VI-1 (page 3)

RELATIVE CONGRUENCE[a] OF EMPLOYER SURVEY ITEMS WITH EMPLOYER'S HIRING AND PROMOTION POLICIES

Moderately Low Congruence

We have found that it is more difficult to evaluate a candidate from an external degree program. Evaluation of these candidates requires longer interviews or more extensive checking through calls or letters. Unless the candidate appears to be outstanding, we may not bother. (#28)

Our organization prefers not to have applicants from external degree programs. We feel that external degree programs are too informal and tend to destroy the credibility of a college degree. (#26)

Most promotions require additional levels of education. In order to satisfy the educational requirement, an employee should get additional education either from a traditional degree or from external degree programs. Obtaining the necessary number of credits is important, not whether or not they came from a traditional program. (#22)

Persons with four year college degrees are given promotions earlier than those without degrees because our organization feels that they are specially prepared to assume responsibility. (#4)

Very Low Congruence

Our organization does not put much emphasis upon college degrees. There would be no advantage for a prospective employee to convert job experience into college credits in an external degree program in order to be considered for employment here. (#30)

We have a pay scale which automatically gives a higher salary to persons with a higher degree. (#18)

Only those applicants who have satisfied the educational qualifications and are among the top students in their class are considered for employment. (#7)

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[a] Relative Level of Congruence — Scale Value Interval Range

"Very High"	+0.850 to + 1.052
"Moderately High"	+0.450 to + 0.849
"Neutral/Slight"	+0.001 to + 0.449
"Neutral/Slightly Low"	-0.000 to - 0.449
"Moderately Low"	-0.450 to - 0.849
"Very Low"	-0.849 to - 1.499

(See Vol. II, Section C)

according to the degree level employees held, they did not recruit new employees from only the highest ranks in their respective college classes, and they did not give automatic preferences to employees with college degrees (items #18, 7, and 30--all very low congruence scores).

Criteria Important to Different Kinds of Employers.--Contrary to what we expected, so far as respondents indicated their organization's hiring and promotion policies and practices, none of the sampling dimensions (neither public/private sector, type of employer activity, nor organization size) related in any meaningful or systematic way to the criteria chosen as congruent. For example, we had speculated that large organizations would be more likely to use formal criteria, and therefore would attach greater importance to grades, class rank, or institutional reputation than would smaller organizations. This did not turn out to be the case; there were no differences in criteria chosen. Similarly, we had entertained the notion that in the public sector, where hiring was subject to civil service regulations, there would be less opportunity to give weight to personality factors than in the private sector, but again the data did not support this expectation.

Employer Attitudes Towards External Degrees

It is unlikely that the employers who participated in this survey knew much about external degree programs or had had significant contacts with EDP graduates. As shown in earlier chapters, the number of students and especially graduates is quite small to date; furthermore, the majority of the graduates were employed persons with considerable work experience. Given what we have learned about employer priorities, it is this work experience, rather than the degree they obtained, which would be the most important employer consideration if they were to be considered for recruitment or promotion. Thus, the most we can learn from the responses of these employers is something about their overall attitude toward external degrees or nontraditional education.

When given the opportunity to state a preference for graduates from colleges with traditional characteristics (for example, strong reputation, grades, class rank--items #25, 8, and 7) or against graduates from external degree programs (items #17, 24, 27, 28, and 26), preferences along this dimension did not emerge; none of these items was rated particularly "congruent" with employers' policies or practices by the spokespersons.

What the analysis did suggest was that the external degree might benefit the graduate through satisfying employing organizations' very broad bias in favor of "more education" in general. The degree may function as a "career booster." Spokespersons indicated that the filling of administrative and supervisory vacancies--which most likely

constitute possible promotions--occurs often from within the organization. The overall enhancement of the graduate's qualifications might help his or her advancement.[8]

Discussion

To some extent, the results of the employer survey run counter to some popular beliefs and conventional wisdom. Periodically, we hear about the highly selective recruitment practices of various organizations, such as top-rated law firms or well-known corporations when searching for management trainees. It should be emphasized that the employer survey we conducted did not include the manufacturing field (the study design, which required "matched" groups from the public and private sectors did not permit the inclusion of this group) and also excluded legal, medical and architectural firms since we sought to concentrate on organizations likely to recruit degree-holders of concern to this study (Associates and Bachelors). While a few employers we surveyed did indicate some preference for recruiting recent graduates from highly reputed institutions, by and large this was not a major priority. Furthermore, college grades and class rank were considered important hiring or promotion criteria only if the candidate had no previous work experience or work references.

The observations we recorded in the course of personal interview conducted in preparation for this survey, and the survey findings themselves, suggest to us that employers may differ with respect to what for them constitute desirable academic credentials, and that for every organization eager to employ Ivy-league graduates, there is one for which graduates from a more modest academic environment are suitable. More important, for many employers the finer nuances of college prestige on quality take a back seat, compared to other criteria. While we do not want to generalize to "all" employers concerning their attitudes towards holders of all types of college degrees, our survey data do strongly suggest that employers--although favorably disposed towards education in general--as a group are not overly concerned with institutional reputation, and that external degree holders should not find themselves denied opportunities in employment settings because of the nature of their degree.

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[8] The "career booster" effect was reported as important by the graduates themselves. Half the graduates responding to their mail survey in this study reported having considered it "very" or "extremely" important for the degree to function as a career credential or "booster," and about two-thirds of them felt that this had been accomplished. Furthermore, over a quarter reported that the career credential effect had been the single most important benefit of the degree and the external degree program experience. (See Chapter III of this report.)

CHAPTER VII

FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY: A LOOK AT OCCUPATION- AND EDUCATION-RELATED EXPERIENCES OF EXTERNAL AND TRADITIONAL DEGREE PROGRAM GRADUATES FROM THE SAME INSTITUTION

Background

External degree programs were created and designed to provide an alternative route to obtaining a college degree--and were intended to reach in particular a clientele not served by "traditional" college degree programs. The response to these programs on the part of non-traditional students, as demonstrated by growing enrollments, attests to the existence of the needs they are trying to fill. At the same time, however, nagging concerns about the equivalence of such programs to the more traditional offerings have beset their sponsors and critics alike. In fact, it was precisely such concerns which prompted the initiation of this study. As originally conceived, this study would have examined the experiences of external degree holders and have made some comparisons between their experiences and those of holders of traditional or conventional Associate and Bachelor's degrees. It was also anticipated that locating an appropriate and methodologically sound comparison group would be a difficult and costly undertaking.

Examination of the comparative "success" of external degree programs could not logically take place, however, until a pool of graduates from several EDPs whose experiences could be documented became available and were identified. The Phase One inventory of external degree programs and their graduate populations--the first part of this study--was conducted to provide the foundation for this documentation.[1] Although the inventory did locate EDPs and obtained basic demographics regarding programs and graduates as of Summer 1976, it also confirmed that a separate survey would be necessary to locate a population of graduates from "traditional" college degree programs similar enough to EDP graduates for comparison purposes.[2]

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[1] See Chapter I of this volume. Also see Sosdian, External Degrees: Program and Student Characteristics.

[2] As the "typical" external degree program graduate was found to be about 35, working full-time, and married with children, it was clear that a cross-section of traditional graduates would not constitute an appropriate comparison group.

Since time and funding constraints ruled out the fielding of a large-scale survey of adult students in traditional programs--a very complex undertaking if valid comparative data were to be obtained--a different albeit more limited research strategy was adopted. We identified one institution--Florida International University--which offers both a bachelors level external degree program meeting this study's criteria and a traditional degree program at the same degree level. Furthermore, we found that the institution itself had initiated some follow-up studies among both groups of graduates and offered to share these data with us. We therefore attempted to derive, from the existing Florida University material, types of comparative data of interest to this study. We did this with the full knowledge that this effort was unlikely to yield the types of solid comparative data on which evaluative judgments could be based. We had no assurance that the FIU traditional graduates would be predominantly adults (and indeed this did not turn out to be the case) and we were also well aware of the need to base generalizations regarding comparative experiences of graduates on data drawn from more than one institution. This then, is a very small-scale effort in the direction of comparability of outcomes for traditional and external degree holders. Given the limitations of the data set, which are being discussed in greater detail below, the findings are at most suggestive. They are useful primarily because they raise some of the basic issues about comparability between these two types of degree holders, and not because they provide conclusive evidence about the relative advantages of these educational alternatives.

The FIU Survey: Data Sources

Florida International University conducted a small-scale survey of its traditional and external degree programs in two stages in 1975 and 1976 using telephone data collection instruments. Although the FIU survey sought among many other types of information some of the same data which form the core of our study of external degree graduates, the questions asked were not identical. Because of resource limitations, the Florida data had not been computerized. The actual questionnaires and telephone interviews were made available to BSSR, and were coded and computerized so as to yield the best fit with our external degree information categories.[3]

It should also be noted that the Florida survey covered holders of bachelor's and master's degrees, whereas BSSR's external degree study focused on associates and bachelors degree holders. Comparative information in this chapter is limited to the bachelors level.

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[3]For details regarding the FIU survey, see Volume II, Section D (Methodology for Florida International University survey data) of this report.

The FIU Survey: The Respondents

Program and Student Characteristics

Altogether, 300 FIU graduates were interviewed, including 218 (73%) Bachelor-level external degree program graduates, 63 (21%) Bachelor-level traditional program graduates, 13 (4%) Masters-level traditional program graduates, and 6 (2%) who could not be classified because of insufficient information (Table VII-1).[4]

Although the total number of interviewees at the bachelor's level was fairly large (281), the small number of Bachelors graduates from the traditional program made comparative data analysis difficult. Data analysis was limited to comparisons of percentages, but even at this most basic level it was necessary to make interpretations with caution.

The largest group for whom we could identify area of study (N=82) was the applied social sciences (an additional 17 graduates had obtained their degree in the behavioral/social sciences). The only other areas with sizable numbers of graduates were (unclassified) individualized programs, general studies programs, and business/public administration. Of the 300 interviews available for this study, 83 did not contain sufficient information to identify study area.

At the bachelor's level, about an equal proportion of EDP and traditional graduates had completed programs in applied social sciences and behavioral social sciences (34% for EDP; 30% for traditional). Proportionately more of the traditional graduates had studied in business/public administration (24%) than had EDP graduates (3%). On the other hand, more of the EDP graduates completed their degree in general studies or individualized studies than did traditional ones.

Compared to the bachelor population in the larger EDP graduate study (this bachelor population, with whom the two FIU groups are being compared throughout this chapter, will be referred to as the BGS group), about the same proportions of both groups--approximately one-third--consisted of applied social sciences or behavioral sciences graduates. Proportions who studied business/public administration differed: about 3 percent for FIU, compared with over one-quarter (28%) of the BGS group. Similar proportions obtained their degree in general studies (FIU, 15%; BGS, 17%) and in humanities/fine arts (FIU, 3%; BGS, 6%). A larger proportion of the FIU group--21 percent--remained in the unclassified "individualized program" category than was the case for the BGS group, for whom the proportion was about 4 percent.

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[4]Information about the personal and program characteristics of the FIU survey participants interviewees was not obtained through the FIU interview, but through that institution's Office of Institutional Research.

TABLE VII-1

NUMBER OF RESPONDING FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY (FIU) GRADUATES BY AREA OF STUDY AND TYPE/LEVEL OF DEGREE

Type/Level of Degree		Area of Study										All
		Natural/ Physical Sciences	Behavioral Social Sciences	Applied Social Sciences	Humanities, Fine Arts	Engineering and Related	Business/ Public Administration	Health	General Studies	Individualized Studies	Information Not Available	
Bachelor External Degree Program Graduates	N	0	9	66	6	0	6	0	32	45	54	218
	(%)	(-)	(53)	(81)	(50)	(-)	(25)	(-)	(97)	(92)	(65)	(73)
Bachelor Traditional Graduates	N	0	8	11	6	0	15	0	1	4	18	63
	(%)	(-)	(47)	(13)	(50)	(-)	(62)	(-)	(3)	(8)	(22)	(21)
Masters Traditional Graduates	N	0	0	5	0	0	3	0	0	0	5	13
	(%)	(-)	(-)	(6)	(-)	(-)	(12)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(6)	(4)
Information not available	N	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	6	6
	(%)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(-)	(7)	(2)
Total N		0	17	82	12	0	24	0	33	49	83	300
(%)		(-)	(100)	(100)	(100)	(-)	(100)	(-)	(100)	(100)	(101)[a]	(100)

[a]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

Demographic and Related Characteristics of FIU Bachelors Interviewees

Although information was not available for all FIU interviewees, overall about half of those for whom dates were known had completed their degree before 1975; the others graduated in 1975 and 1976 (Table VII-2).

The "typical" EDP graduate from this institution was a man (60% of this group were men), white (86%), married (78%), about 42 years old when the degree was completed, and had been working while enrolled and was working when he was interviewed (94% for both points in time) (Table VII-3). The "typical" traditional bachelors graduate was slightly less likely to be a man (52%), considerably less likely to be white (61%), even less likely to be married (46%), several years younger when the degree was completed (about 25), less likely to have been working while enrolled (61%) but probably working at the time of the interview (82%).

It is easily seen from these demographic data that the only characteristics held in common by the two groups--and this is in approximate terms only--is sex distribution (the slight majority of both groups is male). The basically different characteristics of these two groups make comparisons with regard to education- and job-related post-degree experiences questionable. When we seized the opportunity to utilize the FIU data set for this study, we had hoped that the number and characteristics of the traditional graduates would enable us to treat them during analysis as a comparison group. Obviously, this did not turn out to be the case.

On the other hand, the FIU external degree graduates were quite similar to the larger population we have studied (the BGS population). On four of the six key demographic characteristics available for comparisons, FIU EDP graduates were similar to BGS respondents. The groups resembled each other with regard to race/ethnic distributions (FIU, 86% white; BGS, 90% white), marital status (FIU, 78% were married; BGS, 80%), employment while studying (FIU, 94%; BGS, 91%) and employment at the time of the interview (FIU, 94%; BGS, 90%). Differences were that FIU EDP graduates on the whole were a few years older when they completed their degree (average age was 42, as compared with 37 for BGS), and were also slightly less likely to be men (60% of the FIU EDP interviewees were men, as opposed to 71% for BGS).

A College Education: Goals and Outcomes

As discussed in more detail in Chapter 3 of this report, the evaluation or assessment of "success" of an educational experience must necessarily take into account the expectations or goals of the learner, and particularly so in the case of adults returning to complete a college degree at a later-than-average time in life. Although the Florida survey did not obtain information in great detail concerning the pre-degree goals of their graduates, it did approach this issue

TABLE VII-2

YEAR COMPLETED DEGREE PROGRAM
BY TYPE/LEVEL OF DEGREE
(Percentage Responding)

Year Completed Degree	Type of Degree	
	Bachelor EDP	Bachelor Traditional
1973	13	8
1974	38	38
1975	38	25
1976	11	28
1977	-	1
Total %	100	100
(N)	(152)	(61)
(B)	(218)	(63)

TABLE VII-3

SELECTED DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDING F.I.U. GRADUATES
(Percentage Responding)

	Men	Women	Bachelor EDP	Bachelor Traditional
	(B = 157)[a]	(B = 118)[a]	(B = 218)	(B = 63)
Percent Men	-	-	60	52
Percent Women	-	-	40	48
(N responding)	-	-	(197)	(59)
Percent White	78	82	86	61
Percent Nonwhite	22	18	14	39
(N responding)	(143)	(112)	(181)	(61)
Percent Married	76	63	78	46
Percent Separated/divorced/widowed	4	18	12	3
Percent Never married	20	19	10	51
(N responding)	(152)	(115)	(193)	(61)
Median Age at Completion of Degree	40	41	42	25
(N responding)	(157)	(118)	(218)	(63)
Percent Employed while in Degree Program	93	79	94	61
(N responding)	(153)	(113)	(218)	(57)
Percent professional, subprofessional, technical	38	75	53	31
Percent armed forces	3	-	2	-
Percent clerical, sales, lower management.	13	20	11	46
(N responding)	(143)	(89)	(206)	(35)
Percent Employed at time of F.I.U. Survey	96	85	94	82
(N responding)	(151)	(110)	(212)	(57)
Percent professional, subprofessional, technical	50	80	60	64
Percent armed forces	1	-	1	-
Percent clerical, sales, lower management.	7	14	8	26
(N responding)	(145)	(93)	(200)	(47)

[a]Base for both men and women include five (5) men and nine (9) women at the Master's level.

[b]Percentages do not total to 100% because only selected occupations are shown in this table.

in a general and still useful fashion.[5] As can be seen from the data shown in Table VII-4, the large majority indicated that their FIU degree did help them to attain both their career/professional and their personal goals. External degree holders show somewhat higher levels of goal attainment but the small number of traditional degree holders for whom these data are available should be kept in mind.

Although the "goals" question posed to FIU interviewees was similar in intent to the "goals" question series used in our survey, differences in wording were large enough to permit only the most general of comparisons. It is however worth noting that a large proportion of both groups indicated that personal goals, as against professional or career goals, had been attained.[6]

Occupation-Related Changes for FIU Graduates[7]

The Work Setting: Employment at Two Points in Time

Proportions of graduates employed at the two points in time differed for the traditional bachelors graduates (61% while enrolled, but 82% at the time of the FIU survey) but not for the EDP graduates (94% at both times) (Table VII-5). While data were not collected about reasons for nonemployment while enrolled, it is likely that the smaller proportion of traditional bachelor graduates who worked while enrolled was related to their average younger age and the other demographic characteristics which caused them to resemble the more typical full-time college student.

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[5]Specific personal and professional goals of FIU interviewees were not recorded in that interview. FIU graduates were asked the following multi-part open-ended question (the raw responses to which were adapted into this study's format): "Has your FIU degree helped you in attaining your career or professional goals? Personal goals? Any problems?"

[6]Of the FIU EDP interviewees, 96 percent indicated their degree helped them in attaining their personal goals, as compared with 89 percent who indicated it had helped them in attaining their professional goals. Of the Bachelors graduate survey (BGS) respondents, a range of 90 percent to 98 percent indicated their EDP degree helped them reach a personal goal (the particular proportion depended upon the particular personal goal), as compared with a range of 61 percent to 84 percent for reaching professional or career-related goals. For further information, see Chapter 3.

[7]Data reported in this section were adapted from the FIU interviews into this study's format. The FIU question series was as follows: "What was your job or status at the point of entering the degree program? Have you been promoted? To what position? Have you changed jobs or responsibilities? What is your current position?"

TABLE VII-4

GRADUATES REPORTING THAT THE F.I.U. DEGREE
HELPED TOWARD GOAL ATTAINMENT
BY TYPE OF DEGREE
(In Percentages)

Goals	Type of Degree	
	Bachelors EDP Graduates	Bachelors Trad. Graduates
Degree helped in attaining professional goals	89	78
(N Responding)	(141)	(23)
Degree helped in attaining personal goals	96	75
(N Responding)	(86)	(12)

TABLE VII-5

EMPLOYMENT: WHILE COMPLETING THE DEGREE PROGRAM
AND AT TIME OF F.I.U. SURVEY
(Percentage Responding)

Employed	Type			
	Bachelors EDP Graduates		Bachelors Trad. Graduates	
	In DP	At Time of Survey	In DP	At Time of Survey
Yes	94	94	61	82
(N)	(206)	(200)	(35)	(47)
No	6	6	39	18
(N)	(12)	(12)	(22)	(10)
Total %	100	100	100	100
(N)	(218)	(212)	(57)	(57)
(B)	(218)	(218)	(63)	(63)

Although only a few FIU respondents were not employed at the time of their interview (N=24), the reasons mentioned for that status were interesting, albeit not unexpected. Of those not employed, three volunteered the explanation that their unemployment was because of enrollment in school (data not shown). Child care responsibilities and not having received any satisfactory job offers each was mentioned by a woman. While these data regarding nonemployment are nominal, the reasons mentioned by those FIU interviewees were about the same as those mentioned by the nonemployed who responded to the BGS.

Type of Employment at Two Points in Time

Both while enrolled in the degree program and at the time of the FIU survey, the majority of the EDP graduates interviewed were working as professionals, subprofessionals, or technicians (53% while enrolled; 60% when surveyed) (Table VII-6). The next most frequent occupation for this group was services (such as police, security, and so on): 28 percent worked in this capacity while enrolled, and 27 percent when surveyed. A noticeably very small proportion (1-2%) were in the Armed Forces.

Although as of the time of the FIU survey the proportions of both groups employed in the various occupational categories were reasonably similar, this similarity was due to considerable change in types of employment between the two points in time for the traditional bachelors graduates.[8] While enrolled, less than one-third (31%) of the traditional graduates were working in professional or related occupations, about one-quarter (26%) were working in a clerical capacity, one-fifth were working in service positions, and another fifth in sales or lower-level management jobs. All these proportions dropped at the second point in time, with a substantial increase occurring (a rise to 64%) for proportion employed in professional or related occupations. On the other hand, very little change was observed among the EDP interviewees with respect to occupation.

When sex of FIU interviewee was taken into account, type of employment looked somewhat different (data not shown). At both points in time, proportionately fewer men reported working as professionals than did women, the difference apparently taken up in the large numbers of men working in service positions. At both points in time, three-quarters or more of reporting women worked as professionals, and one-fifth or less worked in clerical or related jobs.

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[8] It should be noted again that the actual number of bachelors traditional graduates employed at either point in time was small (less than 50).

TABLE VII-6

TYPE OF EMPLOYMENT: WHILE COMPLETING THE DEGREE AND AT TIME OF SURVEY BY TYPE OF DEGREE
(Percentage Responding)

Type of Employment	Type			
	Bachelors EDP Graduates		Bachelors Trad. Graduates	
	In DP	At Time of Survey	In DP	At Time of Survey
Professional, Subprofessional, Technical	53	60	31	64
Armed Forces	2	1	-	-
Clerical[a]	9	6	26	11
Services[b]	28	27	20	11
Sales; lower-level management	2	2	20	13
Machine Trades, Processing, Operatives, Structural work	2	2	3	-
Other[d]	1	1	-	-
Unable to code	1	-	-	2
Total %	98[c]	99[c]	100	101[c]
(N)	(206)	(200)	(35)	(47)
(B)	(206)	(200)	(35)	(47)

[a]Includes (but not limited to) financial-related and data processing clerical.

[b]Includes (but not limited to) protective services such as police; health services; flight attendants.

[c]Does not total to 100% due to rounding.

[d]Nonspecified government work; agriculture-related work.

Comparing FIU external degree recipients with their counterparts in the larger survey (BGS) illustrates the existence of "college-specific" differences. Although in both groups the majority (60%) were working as professionals at both points in time, similarities ceased with this category. Positions in the Armed Forces were more frequent for those responding to the graduate survey (13%) than for those from FIU (1%), whereas positions in service occupations were more frequent for FIU interviewees (27%) than they were for BGS respondents (9%). Because FIU apparently did not graduate large numbers of men on active duty--whereas these constitute a sizable proportion of the graduate population in other EDP programs--it is not reasonable or possible to base comparative assessments with respect to occupational consequences of EDP vs. traditional programs solely on the experiences of FIU graduates.

Job-Related Changes Since Completing the FIU Degree[9]

Although the number of traditional graduates who had worked while enrolled was small (and hence percentages are rough indicators only), it seemed that EDP graduates more typically experienced a "promotion or increase in pay or benefits," and traditional graduates more typically "changed to a different job" (Table VII-7). Given the lower proportions of traditional graduates who had been working as professionals while enrolled, this finding seems quite logical.

Pay increases and promotions are probably a better indicator of the relative usefulness of the degree for these two groups, and the data suggest that external degree holders slightly more often experienced this outcome--but again, the number of traditional graduates is too small for a firm conclusion.

FIU vs. BGS Graduates

Differences in question wording and in particular the lack of data on "perceived" changes for FIU graduates (e.g., a perceived increase in status) preclude exact comparisons between the FIU and BGS data, but it seems clear that FIU graduates reported fewer objective changes in their job situation (pay increases, promotions, changes to a different job) than was the case in the larger external degree survey.

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[9]Only limited job-related change information was requested of FIU interviewees (see footnote # 7). Furthermore, the job-change question used in the FIU interview did not have the respondent specify whether the job related change (if any) occurred "after entering" the degree program, or if "since completing" the program. In our estimation, however, the tone of the question suggested a reference point of the latter instance.

TABLE VII-7

JOB-RELATED CHANGES OCCURRING SINCE COMPLETING THE FIU DEGREE PROGRAM[a]
BY TYPE OF DEGREE
(Percentage Reporting Change)

Job Change	Type of Degree	
	Bachelor EDP Graduate	Bachelor Traditional DP Graduate
An increase in status or respect from employer and/or coworkers	1	6
An increase in job responsibilities	3	6
A promotion or increase in pay or benefits	12	9
A change to a different job	6	34
An increase in job security	2	3
(N responding)	(206)	(35)
(B)	(206)	(35)

[a]This was not a question posed directly to FIU interviewees. This table presents applicable coded responses to the FIU open-ended question series: "What was your job or status at the point of entering the degree program? Have you been promoted? To what position? Have you changed jobs or responsibilities? What is your current position?"

Over half the BGS respondents reported receiving a "promotion or an increase in pay or benefits" (58%), and the same for "changing to a different job" (51%). Both kinds of changes were cued in the FIU interview, yet respective percentages reporting these changes were only 12 percent and 6 percent. The sex distribution of these two groups was not different enough to suggest that sex of graduate could account for such difference in reported job changes by the two groups. Average age upon degree completion differed by five years (42 years for FIU EDP interviewees, vs. 37 for BGS respondents), and this may have played a part, together with the afore-mentioned differences with respect to graduates who were members of the armed forces at the time of graduation. Since other demographic or basic personal-inventory variables concerning which we had information did not differ in any visible sense between the two groups, it is obvious that other factors--perhaps enrollees' initial goals or reasons for completing the degree, in some measure--affected the amount of job change FIU graduates realized.

After the FIU Degree: Further Education[10]

Applications for Admission into Further Degree Programs

As can be seen in the information displayed in Tables VII-8-10, application patterns of Florida's EDP graduates were just slightly different from those of the traditional bachelors graduates. Almost half (47%) of the EDP graduates applied for admission to a subsequent degree program, 7 percent more than the traditional graduates. EDP graduates appeared somewhat less likely to have applied to a doctoral level program than were the traditional applicants (although again, it must be remembered that actual numbers of applicants were small). It was interesting that about the same proportion of external graduates applied for "re-entry" into their alma mate, as did their traditional counterparts--52 percent and 54 percent, respectively.

While we sought to examine the selectivity of institutions chosen by applicants, we were able to obtain data for only a small number of the applications (Table VII-11).[11] Many were made to institutions which

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[10]Data reported in this section were adapted from the FIU interviews into the larger study's format. The FIU question series was as follows: "Have you applied to a graduate or professional school? Were you accepted? When did you enroll? Name of college or university? Name of degree program? Field? Have you completed graduate or professional school? When?"

[11]Information regarding selectivity and the selectivity ratings themselves were obtained from Alexander Astin, Predicting Academic Performance in College (New York: Free Press, 1971).

TABLE VII-8

APPLICATION FOR ADMISSION TO A FIRST SUBSEQUENT DEGREE PROGRAM
BY TYPE OF DEGREE
(Percentage of Graduates Responding)

Applied?	Type of Degree	
	Bachelors EDP Graduates	Bachelors Trad. Graduates
Yes.	47	40
No	53	60
Total %	100	100
(N)	(207)	(55)
(B)	(218)	(63)

TABLE VII-9

LEVEL OF DEGREE APPLIED FOR BY TYPE OF FIU DEGREE
(Percentage of Graduates Responding)

Level Applied For	Type of Degree	
	Bachelors EDP Graduates	Bachelors Trad. Graduates
Bachelor	1	-
Masters	96	72
Doctorate & Professional Degree	3	28
Total %	100	100
(N)	(74)	(18)
(B)	(98)	(23)

TABLE VII-10

APPLICATIONS: SOURCE AND INSTITUTIONAL DESTINATION
(In Percentages)[a]

Institutional Destination	Source: Type of Degree of Applicant	
	Bachelor EDP	Bachelor Traditional
Application to FIU	52	54
Application elsewhere. . . .	48	46
Total %	100	100
(N)	(93)	(26)
(B)	(93)	(26)

[a]Unit of analysis for this table is the application made.

had not been given a selectivity rating in our reference.[12] We did note that nearly all of the applications about which we had data were made to middle rated institutions. This was true for applications made by both groups of FIU graduates.

FIU EDP Graduates as compared with BGS Respondents.--While the proportion of EDP graduates from FIU who applied to enter a further degree program was smaller than the proportion of BGS respondents doing so (47% vs. 54%), the gap was not a large one. About the same proportions applied for entry into a Master's level program (96% of the FIU applicants, and 89% of the BGS applicants) and about the same proportions were admitted (93% of the FIU applicants, and 91% of the BGS applicants).

The rate of seeking admission into one's alma mater differed between the two groups. It was lower for BGS further-degree seekers (34% of their applications were made to their alma mater as compared with 52% for FIU applications).

Although data were scanty, it seemed that FIU's EDP applicants may have been restricting the range of selectivity of the institutions to which they sought admission, compared with the selectivity range for BGS applications. Twenty three percent of the BGS applications were sent to institutions with ratings outside the mid-range, but this was the case for only one of the 29 FIU applicantions.[13]

Admission to a Degree Program: Why or Why Not?

It can be seen from Table VII-11 that the overwhelming proportion of both groups of FIU applicants were admitted to further study--93 percent to 95 percent. Of those who had not gained admission by the time of their FIU interview, most indicated their application(s) were still pending.

Especially considering the small number of graduates involved, it was neither realistic nor possible to explore factors which might have affected admissions. Table VII-12 displays, essentially for documentation's sake, the outcome of each application in relation to the selectivity of the institution to which it was sent. The data shed little light on the question of selectivity and admissions.

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[12] In most cases, an institution (or sometimes, a campus) did not have a selectivity rating because the institution had not been operating long enough to have had sufficient data concerning admissions needed to calculate the rating, or because the institution elected not to disclose the necessary data.

[13] The selectivity rating scale ranged 1 to 7 (low to high), with "mid-range" considered to be ratings of 3, 4, or 5.

TABLE VII-11

OUTCOME OF APPLICATION BY TYPE OF DEGREE
(Percentage of Graduates Responding)

Outcome of Application	Type of Degree	
	Bachelor EDP	Bachelor Traditional
Pending	5	5
Not Admitted	2	0
Admitted but Did Not Enroll.	2	4
Admitted and Enrolled.	91	91
Total %	100	100
(N)	(88)	(22)
(B)	(98)	(23)

TABLE VII-12

OUTCOME OF APPLICATION BY SELECTIVITY RATING OF INSTITUTION APPLIED TO AND TYPE OF DEGREE PROGRAM APPLICANT COMPLETED
(Number of Applications)

	Type of Degree Program			
	EDP		Traditional	
	N Applications to FIU	N Applications Elsewhere	N Applications to FIU	N Applications Elsewhere
Selectivity and Application Outcome				
High (6, 7)				
Pending		0		
Admitted		1		
Not admitted		0		
No answer		0		
Subtotal N	-	1	-	0
Medium (3, 4, 5)				
Pending		1		
Admitted		18		
Not admitted		0		
No answer		0		
Subtotal N	-	19	-	9
Low (1, 2)				
Pending				
Admitted				
Not admitted				
No answer				
Subtotal N	-	0	-	0
Unknown				
Pending	1	3	0	0
Admitted	43	20	13	3
Not admitted	2	0	0	0
No answer	2	2	1	0
Subtotal N	48	25	14	3
Subtotal Number of Applications by Type of Institution Applied to	48	45	14	12
Total Number of Applications	93		26	

FIU EDP Graduates as compared with BGS Respondents.--Admissions rates for both groups were nearly identical. Ninety-one percent of the BGS applicants were admitted to further study, and for FIU EDP graduates the figure was 93 percent. In both data sets, definite sex differences appeared only at the application stage. Women less frequently applied for further study (among BGS respondents, 44 percent of the women applied, compared with about 55 percent of the men; see above for the FIU figures), but admissions rates were essentially the same for each sex.

For BGS applicants, institution selectivity did seem to affect admissions in the direction of increased difficulty in gaining admission accompanying increased selectivity. The selectivity data for FIU EDP applicants were too scanty for comparisons.

Summary

A few observations can be made at this point concerning the post-degree experiences of FIU's EDP and traditional bachelor program graduates. The small number of cases and the lack of detailed data precluded in-depth analysis of the differences between the two groups of Florida International University graduates. Indications were that with regard to negotiability, traditional bachelor degree holders experienced more job change. This most likely was due to their pre-degree employment status, however. Unlike EDP graduates, traditional students while enrolled were either not working at all, or held jobs at the lower end of the occupational spectrum.

Florida's EDP graduates reported substantially fewer negotiability experiences than EDP graduates in the multi-institutional BGS survey. This discrepency may have been due to personal characteristics of the Florida graduates--in particular, on the average they were comparatively a much older group. It also may have resulted from differences in question wording in the two surveys, or from any number of other sources. The answer cannot be determined without further research.

With regard to the acceptability of each degree, neither FIU group appeared to have experienced problems in gaining admission to further degree study. Well over 90 percent of both groups' applicants were successful in their attempts for entrance, and this was essentially the same success rate experienced by BGS respondents.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMING UP

To date, only a small number of men and women have been awarded external degrees at the Associate or Bachelor's level. Although we did not study a cross-section of these degree-holders, but chose instead a carefully selected group in order to learn as much as possible about persons in various fields of study, we feel confident that some general conclusions are warranted.

External degree holders are adults who elected this study option to consolidate and supplement earlier study experiences without sacrificing commitment to work and family responsibilities. The opportunities to obtain credit for earlier academic work and to complete degree requirements without experiencing the dislocation which classroom attendance entails are the major attractions of these programs. The most innovative--and therefore most controversial--feature of some of these programs, such as credit for work or life experience, seldom influenced these graduates decisively when they chose an external degree program.

A very large proportion of these degree holders worked full-time in responsible positions at the time of enrollment, and were earning commensurate incomes. Although there is no question that they hoped to derive work-related benefits from the completion of the external degree, many of them, and especially those who sought the Bachelor's degree, were not seeking initial access to the job market. In that respect, their situation is fundamentally different from that of the "new" college graduate.

Job-related goals were by no means the only motivation which led to degree completion. The personal satisfaction of having the degree, the extent to which it resulted in higher self-esteem and increased respect from others were important factors for the great majority of college graduates, and especially for the oldest group among them. And despite the fact that most of these graduates were in their thirties or older when they obtained the degree, the great majority had plans for further study and had implemented them by the time of the survey.

To some extent, these findings came as a surprise. Before we undertook this study, we tended to believe that perhaps more than other college students, adults who enrolled in external degree programs were predominantly motivated by "practical" considerations, for example, to obtain paper credentials for work they were already doing in order to satisfy the increasing educational requirements of bureaucratic institutions. Obviously, their goals were much more diverse.

How useful was the degree in the two areas of special concern to this study, further education and work? It is clear that almost all those who sought access to higher-level academic programs were able to

enroll. It is also clear that they did so in moderately selective institutions, and that the few who sought access to more selective programs or institutions experienced some difficulties. However, one cannot conclude from this that their degree was less "acceptable" than a traditional degree, since highly selective institutions generally accept a low proportion of applicants. In the one case in which we were able to compare the experiences of traditional bachelor's degree recipients with those of graduates who held an external degree from the same institution, the admissions experience of the groups was identical in this respect.

Furthermore, given the priorities and interests of external degree holders as established in this study, it seems inappropriate to measure the acceptability of the external degree in relation to graduate or professional schools with selective admission policies. The majority of these adults wanted to pursue further studies with minimal physical and social dislocation and to enhance their knowledge and qualifications in the fields and occupation in which they are already well entrenched. Like many traditional degree holders (including the Florida comparison group for which we collected data) if they enrolled in a further degree program, they often chose to stay with the same institution. When this was the case, or if they applied to mid-range institutions, the admissions process was evidently a smooth one. Only a minority reported problems which they attributed to the nature of their Associate or Bachelor's credential.

In the world of work, the external degree yielded tangible benefits for the majority of degree holders. Women as a group profited especially, as did those who were at the lower end of the occupational spectrum prior to degree completion. The unevenness of the negotiability experiences was not too surprising. Many graduates were well established in their careers when their degree was awarded, and although definitive data on the relationship between education and employer hiring and promotion policies is lacking, our own pilot study of employer policies did suggest that educational credentials may be primarily important in initial job access.

At the same time, it is well worth noting that the information we developed through our pilot study about employer attitudes and behavior pointed to considerable employer interest in the educational objectives and accomplishments of staff members. The great majority of external degree seekers had acquainted their employers with their study plans, and a sizable proportion (one-third) had received help from these employers in meeting study costs. The group of employers we surveyed felt very positive about education, not only or primarily because it might enhance the technical skills of degree holders, but because of its broader or more general impacts. Employer interest was by no means limited to the government or nonprofit sector, where we had anticipated to find much of the support for external degree programs.

In fact, those graduates who were employed in the private sector were especially likely to experience job-related benefits upon degree completion.

Our study findings clearly underline the usefulness of external degrees and show that those who completed degree programs are well satisfied with their experience. Nevertheless, it would be unwise to jump to the conclusion that external degrees are an educational panacea. For one thing, our study dealt only with graduates. We know little about the experiences of adults who enrolled in external degree programs and subsequently dropped out or transferred to other institutions for the completion of their degrees. Similarly, we collected no data about those who enrolled and continued their studies, but were not degree-seekers. Although we have no basis for making the a priori assumption that nongraduates would have had more or less favorable experiences and outcomes than did graduates, questions concerning program persistence and within-level transfer opportunity remain to be addressed.

Because the focus of our study was the utility of the degree as an educational credential, we were unable to devote much attention to matters of curriculum or study content. Nevertheless, paradoxical as it may sound, we feel that the majority of these external degree programs are really less "nontraditional" than are some programs not carrying the external label. EDP program characteristics especially relevant in this sense are the options of credit for work or life experience. At least within our data set, we detected little indication that these external degree programs necessarily put more emphasis on integrating study and work experience than some conventional programs which also offer work-study or other individualized options.

It is also important to point out that the degree-completers we studied are a fairly select group--men and women with considerable prior traditional education who were relatively affluent. The programs they completed were designed for older students, for whom residence requirements and classroom attendance present major obstacles, but who are quite capable of dealing with traditional academic requirements. While the external degree option appeared to be an attractive one for motivated and well-prepared men and especially women who missed out on completing college earlier in life, we feel it is unlikely to be viable for adult degree-seekers who need to overcome serious educational deficits or who seek radical academic alternatives.

In our opinion, an appropriate next step in research would be a systematic investigation of relative advantages and disadvantages of "conventional" programs for adult students (for example, evening and extension study) as compared to external degree programs. It may well be that for many adult students the absence of classroom attendance requirements and the opportunity for obtaining full credit for earlier college work completed in other institutions together outweigh

any advantages a conventional program might offer. One might also hypothesize that if evening or extension programs constitute a minor and low-prestige activity in an institution whose priorities are elsewhere, external degree students may actually receive more attention and be academically better off than adults who attend traditional institutions. But these possible advantages must be weighed against benefits often derived from active membership in an educational community and from instruction in a classroom setting--not only in terms of learning styles, but also in terms of broader socialization and interaction opportunities--which may be just as important for adults as they are for younger students. These are all potential topics for future research.

Within the limitations and boundaries which were set for this project, we feel that the data presented provide valuable base-line information in an area where to date only anecdotal evidence and ideological rhetoric have been available to those who sought to judge the usefulness of external degree programs for students in need of new options.

Furthermore, in our opinion, it seems clear that credentialling benefits can accrue to individual external degree program graduates. On this basis, these programs should be considered as legitimate educational alternatives by prospective students, their sponsors and educators.

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